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Historical notes

**KIBRISTA SOSYALIST
GERÇEK LONDRA BURÖSÜ**

 **MAY 2011**

SOCIALIST TRUTH IN CYPRUS

Publisher's Note

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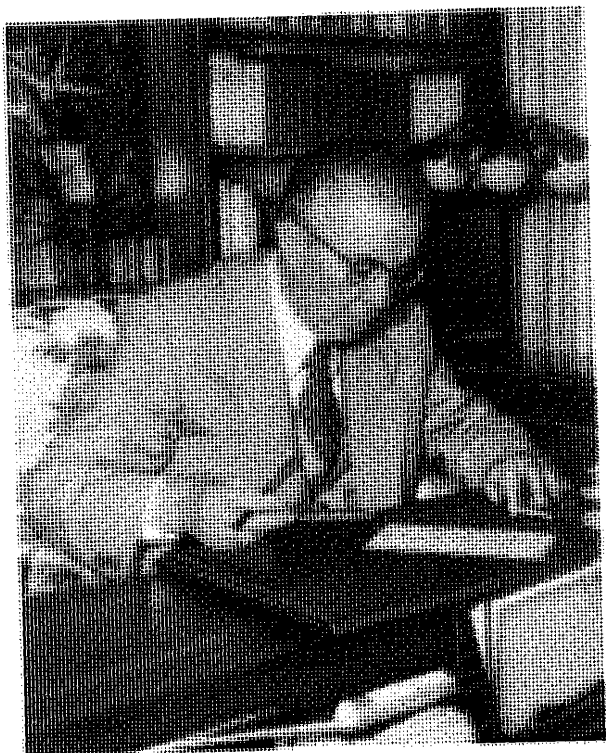
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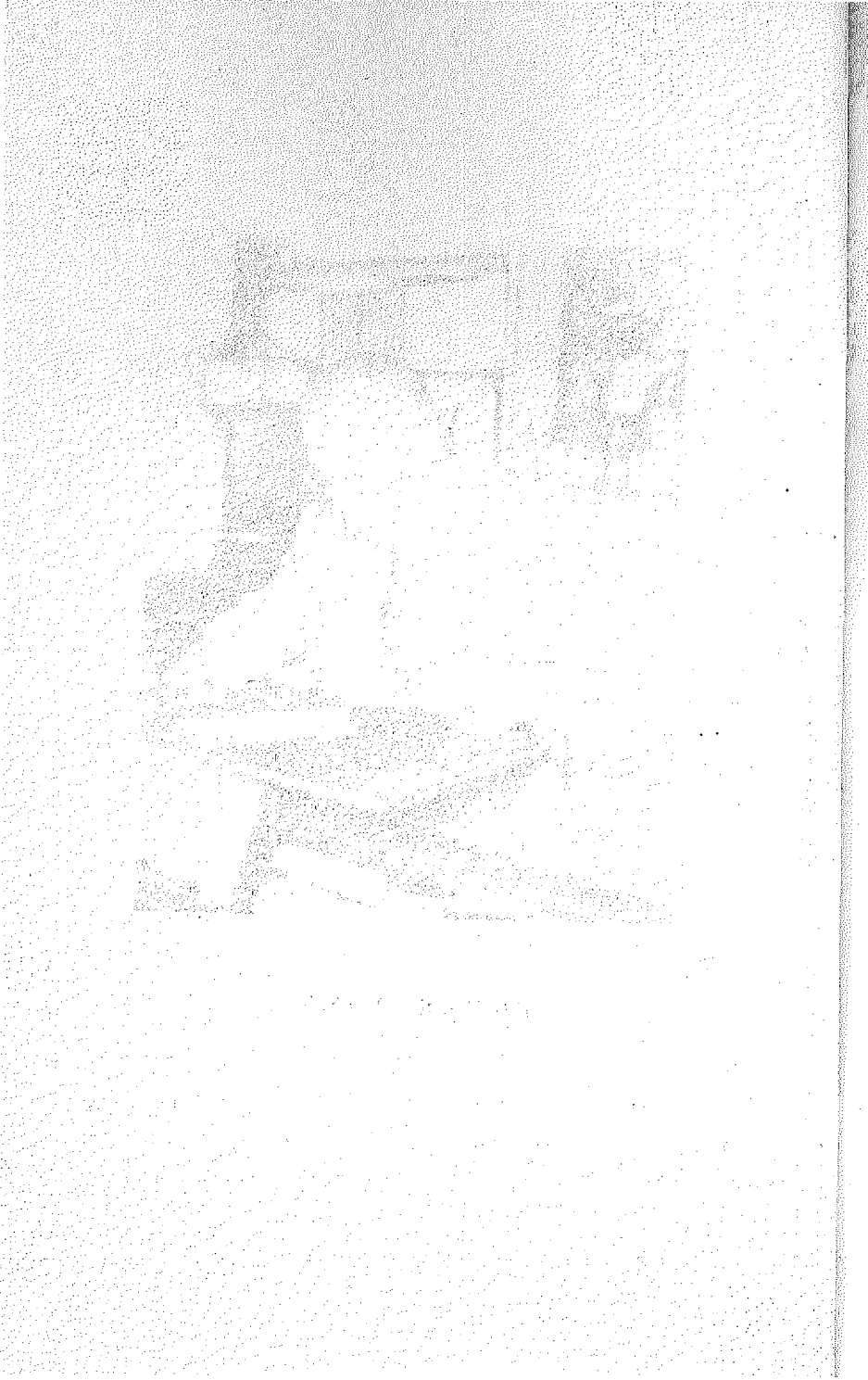
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RIISING ABOVE OLD ANIMOSITIES

By way of Introduction

A brief historical survey ■ The decision of the Albanian communists to establish connections with the CPY ■ The monarchs of Serbia and princes of Montenegro — the main culprits for the bitter relations between the Albanian and Serbian, Montenegrin and other peoples in the past ■ One of the gravest injustices of this century in Europe — in 1913 Albania was cut in half arbitrarily ■ The Great-Serb genocide in the Albanian regions in Yugoslavia in the period between the two wars. Why did the Albanian communists enter into relations with the CPY at the time of the National Liberation War?

The decision of the Albanian communists in the summer of 1941 to establish internationalist relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia showed the maturity which the communist movement in Albania had achieved at that time. The worthiest representatives of the communist groups had begun the fight against the fascist occupiers as early as 1939. Just as they were boldly and resolutely overcoming the feuds and divisions amongst themselves, and heading with conviction towards the founding of the Communist Party of Albania, with similar courage and maturity they were surmounting the old animosities, feuds and the deep gulf which had been created over centuries in the relations of our country with its Yugoslav neighbours.

It is an indisputably recognized fact, accepted by all, that to describe the relations between our two countries before 1941 as embittered is putting it mildly. Over their whole range, they consist of dramas and tragedies of the gravest kind, packed with aggressions, murders and plunderings, reeking with bloody crimes which were committed openly in «modern» Europe over the territories and fate of a small, but brave and invincible people — the Albanian people.

This whole grievous legacy which had been built up over decades had been created through no fault of the peoples, and the Albanian people in particular have never, on any occasion, been to blame for it. The blame for this rests on the anti-Albanian policy of the monarchs of Serbia and princes of Montenegro who wanted to gobble up Albania, on the policy of violence, expansion and genocide which they, aided and abetted, openly or secretly, by the Great Powers of that time, had pursued towards the Albanian people and the Albanian territories.

Without going any further back in history, everybody knows about the fresh great tragedy which began to be played to the detriment of the Albanian people, especially in the second half of the last century.

When it became clear that the «Sick Man of the Bosphorus» was on his death bed, both the hopes and possibilities that the Albanian people would win the independence which they had been seeking by force of arms for centuries, and their struggle and efforts to bring this day as close as possible, quickly mounted. But precisely when the day was approaching for Albania to throw off the yoke of Ottoman rule, new ferocious enemies, with aims identical with those of the Ottomans, thought that the time had come for them to get little Albania into their clutches. The monarchs of Italy, Austro-Hungary, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria rushed to grab whatever they could from what they called «the periphery of the Ottoman Empire». This was an extremely grave and painful «reward» which the neighbours gave the brave and dauntless Albanian people, who had poured out torrents of blood in raising a strong wall against

the further advance of the Ottoman hordes towards Europe. This was the deepest ingratitude towards that nation which, whether in the battles of the neighbouring peoples for defence against the Ottoman onslaughts or in their movements and uprisings for liberation, had not spared its own finest sons who gave their lives precisely as if they were defending the freedom of their own people.

In particular, the Serbian and Montenegrin hordes, incited by the reactionary cliques of that time, assailed the Albanian territories, killing, plundering and destroying whatever they found in front of them. The chronicles of that time are filled with the most blood-curdling events. Under fire from many enemies, who fought sometimes each on their own account, sometimes in agreement to divide the prey jointly, the Albanian people responded to the new situation with endless wars. However, the ratio of forces was such that, after shedding torrents of blood, the Albanian population was forced, with unallayable grief, to relinquish whole pieces of its Homeland on the borders with Serbia and Montenegro. Besides the thousands who were killed and burned out, tens of thousands of Albanians were expelled from their lands and driven towards the south, or left to roam about Europe and Asia as refugees. Statistics show that at the end of the last century, as a result of the occupation of the outermost regions of Kosova by Serbia, Montenegro and Austro-Hungary, about 300 000 Albanians who had been violently expelled had settled in the internal regions of the vilayets of Kosova and Shkodra alone.

Naturally, this unprecedented genocide and developing danger which threatened the whole of Albania was bound to arouse the greatest hatred and bring the whole country to its feet to resist both the Ottoman Turk and the *shkja*¹, «a

¹ Term used by the Albanian population of Kosova and of other regions in Yugoslavia about the Serb, Montenegrin and other chauvinists to express their hatred against the policy of oppression and exploitation pursued towards them.

scourge worse than the Ottoman», as the people described the Serbian occupiers at that period. The Albanian League of Prizren of great fame was founded and carried out its unforgettable historic activity precisely at this grave period, setting as its objective both the struggle for freedom and independence and the struggle in defence of the integrity of the national territory, in defence of the legitimate rights of a people threatened with extermination.

The Albanian patriots and people left nothing undone to prevent the menace which came from the north! They were ready to turn over the page of all the past and there was never any lack of messages seeking friendship and good neighbourly relations with the fraternal Serbian, Montenegrin, Macedonian and other peoples.

But the fact is that there was no limit to the greed of the chauvinists, monarchs and princes of the neighbouring countries, and as a result, the threat to Albania from the north became more and more serious. Behind them stood the blackest European reaction. Through the policy which it pursued, Serbia became, in the mind of the freedom-loving Albanian, the symbol of his sworn enemy.

Gallons of blood were shed by both sides and thousands and thousands of Serbs, Montenegrins and others left their bones in our mountain passes and on our plains. Obviously, the flower of friendship could not sprout through these pools of blood, but the thorn of hatred and hostility would flourish and grow. However, the Albanians did not shed their blood on the soil of Serbia and Montenegro, the Albanians did not descend with fire and steel upon the neighbouring countries and peoples. The opposite occurred. The Albanians defended their own lands, wives and children, their homes and possessions.

This situation continued until 1912, when the great victory — the independence of Albania, was quickly followed by one of the greatest injustices of this century in Europe: Albania was cut in half — Kosova and other Albanian re-

gions were violently annexed to Yugoslavia. Naturally, if you cut the body of a country and a people in half, and artificially attach one half to another creation, such an act cannot serve as a «bridge to conciliation», «friendship» and «fraternity».

If this were not enough, however, even after 1912-1913 the anti-Albanian policy of the Karadjordjevićs and all the unscrupulous great-Serb reaction was intensified in all forms and directions. The policy of extermination, discrimination and denationalization of the Albanian population which had been placed under Serbian occupation was followed by secret plans for the annexation of other parts of Albania. The secret Treaty of London of 1915, which two years later the great Lenin published to the world and denounced, is further evidence of the notorious, unrelenting anti-Albanian policy, not only of the reactionary Great Powers of that time, but also of the then Yugoslav state, a creation of imperialism. The public denunciation of this predatory Treaty did not make the face of Great-Serb chauvinism blush or go pale. A little later Yugoslavia once again sanctioned *de jure* its «rights» to the occupied Albanian territories and set out with greater zest on the course of the denationalization of the Albanian population which it had placed under occupation.

At the same time it tried to find new ways to realize its old dream of gobbling up the whole of Albania. It was precisely the Serbian monarchs who came to the aid of Zog who had fled from Albania in June 1924; it was they who kept him, found him mercenaries, supplied him with forces and weapons and created all the conditions for the future despot to carry out the counter-revolution in Albania in December 1924. In return, Zog initially gave the Serbs other pieces of Albanian territory, such as Vermosh and Shën-Naum, and, assuredly, in time would have given them the whole of Albania, if the great gamble of the Great Powers had not thrown the puppet king finally into the lap of fascist Italy and set the country on the course of Italian fascist colonization.

But even after this, there is a whole bitter history of open and disguised acts carried out by the reactionary governments of Yugoslavia, dominated by Serbia, in the direction of the Albanian state.

When the reactionary Serbian governments saw that others had gained control of the card of Zog, they set in motion their secret agency within our country and among the reactionary Albanian emigrants in Yugoslavia and made all kinds of efforts to create an explosive situation within the Albanian Kingdom. Later, under the cloak of an «uprising» against the Zogite tyranny, the Serb secret agents would turn for aid to the same Serbian circles that had brought Zog to power a few years earlier.

These chauvinist circles, always ready to stage an invasion as «aid», trained whole regiments and kept them in readiness around the borders of Albania. The vanguard of these mercenary regiments consisted of hardened criminals, Yugoslav and non-Yugoslav, who, decked out in authentic Albanian national costumes, would be the first to pour over the borders at the appropriate moment. But the fact is that, despite all their stage props, these plans remained only on paper. This occurred not only because fascist Italy and international reaction, which backed it for its own interests, would not and did not allow the Albanian apple to assuage the appetite of the Great-Serbs, but also because the Serbian secret agency and propaganda in Albania was able to find a favourable terrain only among a few degenerate elements without any influence, but never among broad strata and, even less, among the people. On account of the atrocities committed, Serbia had long become synonymous with evil in the mind of the Albanian.

The denationalizing policy which the Great-Serbs pursued towards Kosova and towards the Albanian population in Montenegro and Macedonia deepened the hatred and made any sign of reconciliation more impossible. From 1913 on, the chauvinist regime of the Great-Serb bourgeoisie employed

the most inhuman political, economic, ideological and military methods and means to denationalize the annexed Albanian territories and populate them with Slavs. During the years 1913-1927 in Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia, by means of the so-called «denationalization through physical elimination», more than 200 thousand Albanians were killed, tens of thousands of others were imprisoned and whole Albanian villages wiped out. Fascism, which was rising in Europe at that time, was finding a worthy forerunner and fellow-traveller in the Great-Serbs. Stojadinović of Serbia, together with Mussolini, prepared the plan for the division of Albania.¹

However, the barbarous mass extermination, accompanied with other equally barbarous means, such as «denationalization through the agrarian reform for colonization»,² «denationalization through expulsion»³, etc., etc., were not yielding the results desired by the Great-Serbs. Unfortunately for the Great-Serbs, the Albanian national sentiments in Kosova and

1 This refers to the negotiations of Ciano, foreign minister of fascist Italy, with Stojadinović, prime minister of the Yugoslav Kingdom, who hatched up plans for the partitioning and occupation of Albania in the bilateral talks in the years 1937-1939.

2 On the basis of documents and incomplete statistics, in the years between the two world wars, 1919-1941, through colonization more than 58 thousand Serbian and Montenegrin colonists were settled in Kosova and more than 370 villages of colonists were created (according to the scientific magazine «Përparimi», Nos. 4-5/1970 and 10/1971 and «Gjurmime Albanologjike» — 1972, published in Prishtina).

As well as this, according to reports of the Yugoslav High Commission for the Reform, during the years 1920-1940, in only some regions of Kosova and Macedonia, 381 245 hectares of land were seized from Albanians and given to colonists, officials, gendarmes, četnici and others.

3 As a result of the Great-Serb rule of terror, during 1913-1941 about 500 000 Albanians were expelled by force from Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia (most of them to Turkey and the remainder to Albania and other countries).

other regions were not wiped out, either with gunpowder or with fire, but on the contrary, the number of the Albanian population on its own territories increased in relation to the Serbian and Montenegrin element in these territories.

Insatiable in their cruelty and infuriated by the motto of the Albanians, «We may die but we'll not give up our country», the Great-Serbs set in motion the «science» of extermination, the ideology and means of the pogrom. Precisely to this phase belong the inhuman deeds of notorious Great-Serbs of the type of Vaso Čubrilović, Atanasije Urošević and other such monsters of the so-called Serbian Cultural Club in Belgrade, the vicious creation of the reactionary Serbian bourgeoisie in the years 1937-1939, and, regrettably, as we were to learn much later, the forerunner of institutions with the same platform in the Yugoslavia of the years from 1945 on. This is not the place, nor is it the purpose of my notes, to dwell at length on the programs and theories of extermination of these neo-Malthusians, whom the Tito regime was later to preserve and raise to the highest ranks of the scientific institutions of «socialist» Yugoslavia. I want to point out only that, on the basis of what they themselves wrote, further incalculable damage was inflicted on the Albanian population, and the hatreds and animosities which for decades had divided the Albanian people, on the one hand, from the Serb, Montenegrin and other peoples, on the other hand, became even more profound.

The truth is that at that time we knew nothing about these «scientific works» and «platforms», worked out and approved, and heard nothing about the authors of them, but with grief we saw and heard about the results of their practical application. Militating in the ranks of our communist groups at that time were a number of comrades from Kosova. They were either the sons of displaced families or individuals who had managed to leave Kosova secretly and had come to mother Albania to escape persecution by the Great-Serbs, to continue their schooling or to find work. Our picture of

the relations between our peoples in general and about the situation in Kosova in particular was made more complete with the blood-curdling stories and facts which these comrades told us.

This was the situation in 1941, when the resistance of our people to the fascist occupiers was continuing all over the country and we were faced with the urgent necessity of founding the Communist Party of Albania.

As can be imagined, to seek relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in such a situation was by no means easy and simple. To us communists, however, the problem was clear. In principle, we could never link communism with chauvinism, nor the Communist Party of Yugoslavia with the reactionary and chauvinist policy of the Yugoslav government towards Albania.

The fact is that Vasil Shanto, Qemal Stafa and I and, after a series of hesitations, Koço Tashko, too, who became the initiators for the establishment of relations with the CPY, knew little or nothing about the life, activity and situation in that party. We had heard that it had been formed after the October Socialist Revolution, that in the first 10-15 years of its existence it had gone through a series of ups and downs, feuds and factions, that various of its cadres had been criticized at different times by the Comintern for stands and lines that were anti-Marxist, Trotskyite, nationalist, and so on, that it had been reorganized in recent years, and was said to have placed itself on a correct line. We knew none of its leaders, indeed we had not heard who they were or what they were called, but the fact that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was a member of the Comintern, the fact that it had expressed itself in favour of open struggle against the fascist danger and, after April 1941, when the Yugoslav monarchy capitulated, the fact that it had launched the slogan of raising all the peoples of Yugoslavia around itself in the fight against the nazi-fascist occupation, impelled us to link ourselves with it, as a sister party

which was fighting for that great cause, which was our cause, too.

As communists, we thought and believed that, since the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had risen in struggle for a new Yugoslavia, it would finally free itself from and destroy all that legacy from the old Yugoslavia, that is, its chauvinism and its long-standing savage and unscrupulous policies against the Albanians. For these reasons, we considered the establishment of relations with the CPY a correct and mature act on our part. That is what we thought and we were quite right.

As I said, however, this was our view, the communists' view. Would the people understand this idea and aim of ours? Would they follow us in the steps which we were going to take? A whole burden of opinion built up over scores and scores of years had to be overcome, and as I mentioned above, this was not an opinion created simply by words or statements, but by torrents of blood, by villages and towns destroyed, by boys and girls cut off in the flower of their youth, by mothers left desolate, by Albanians whose deep-rooted, freedom-loving and patriotic spirit had been profoundly antagonized. Now we were going to tell them: We, the Albanian communists, are going to create close fraternal links with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, with that party in the ranks of which militate Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians, etc.

From what has been said above, it is understandable why the Albanian has regarded the Serb with diffidence. But we were determined to take this step because we considered to be the right thing to do. Even if some of our people would not understand us at first, they would soon be convinced and understand us.

We regarded the links with the CPY as something natural, as links between communists, between brothers of common ideals. We would exchange experience and assist one another in the sacred fight for the freedom and independence of our

countries, and between us, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, we could settle justly all the ugly things which history had left in the relations between our peoples. The peoples are essentially freedom-loving. Our people, in particular, have never harassed the others and have respected the heroes and peoples who have fought against invaders. Now the peoples of Yugoslavia were at war against the same enemy — the foreign nazi-fascists and the internal reactionaries, therefore, we were convinced that our splendid people would understand and support us. Thus, with this act which we undertook to carry out, we were taking the first step not only to eliminate any eventual obstacle to the mobilization of the peoples of the respective countries in the fight for freedom, but also to make real, great progress toward settling historical injustices and overcoming the legacy of hostilities created in the past.

We undertook to explain to the Albanian people, to talk to the people openly about our ideas, and we did so. Our people, our marvellous people, whose eyes have never been blinded by the diseased principles of chauvinism, understood us. We believed, indeed we were convinced, that the Yugoslav comrades thought and judged matters in the same way. Therefore, we decided to establish links with them. Time would prove to what extent they were truly Marxist-Leninists, whether they would put into practice what they declared unreservedly in their statements.

In the step which we took by deciding to establish contact with the CPY at those moments, we were faced, among others, with one very great difficulty which was very hard to deal with. What was bombastically proclaimed as «the liberation of Albanian territories from the Serbian yoke», the formation of «Greater Albania», had been «realized» under the jackboot of fascism and in the interests of fascism. It cannot be concealed that this demagoguery confused many people in Kosova and also deceived some in Albania who called themselves nationalists.

Naturally, we were not going to be and were not taken in by this trick of fascism, therefore, we told the people clearly and precisely: We must not be deceived by the «liberation» and propaganda of this occupier which poses as a «liberator»(!), but which in fact has enslaved the whole of Albania. We can never expect nazi-fascism, the most ferocious enemy of the freedom and independence of the peoples, to solve our problems, big or small, can never expect any benefits from fascism which has placed us in the most hideous bondage, which is maiming and killing the finest sons and daughters of the people, the plague which has set itself the aim of destroying mankind. Irreconcilable struggle against it, everywhere, at every moment — this is our immediate duty.

All these things and others of the same type we discussed during those days of summer 1941, when we decided to enter into internationalist relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. We were convinced that in this way we were making the proper contribution to the great cause of the war against fascism and for the accomplishment, along with the liberation war, of the social revolution, too, the revolution which would solve everything.

This is how we considered the matter and this is what we decided to do, in this way performing an act worthy of genuine, mature communists, communists with clear minds and pure hearts.

Ahead of us lay practice, life, the war. What would they prove to us?

The truth is that the start of our relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was a happy and promising start. As I shall relate in detail later, this had to do with all that period when the internationalist communist Miladin Popović was amongst us, especially with the period before the emissaries of Tito began to come to Albania. Beginning from March 1943, however, when Tito's first emissary Blažo Jovanović uttered the first absurd anti-Marxist claim against

our Party, and over the next five or six years, step by step we were to enter into conflict with Tito's men, were to clash with them and oppose them, and they were to oppose us. These were five or six years of the process of getting to know each other, a process of stern, extremely difficult and complicated struggle, a struggle against traps and plots hatched up by the Yugoslav leadership in order to subjugate us and turn us into their obedient tools.

All the documents and facts prove that the leaders of the CPY, headed by Tito, had made plans to subjugate the Communist Party of Albania, to put it under their direct leadership, and consequently make our National Liberation War an appendage of their war. They had thought and planned to have their men placed everywhere by the time Albania was liberated, so they could act with Albania in every direction — politically, economically, militarily, organizationally and in the international plane, as they wished. Naturally, all this activity was hidden under the cloak of the common aims of the National Liberation War against the occupiers, under the leadership of two communist parties which had linked themselves like flesh to bone with the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik Party and Stalin.

The Yugoslavs were so conceited and had created such a megalomaniacal idea of themselves and their war, making them underrate our war, that they had reached the point of thinking that without them there would be no communist party and no national liberation war in Albania. As a result of this conceit, the Yugoslav leadership minimized our war and took no interest in really informing itself about and studying our objective conditions, social and economic situations, the class struggle, the bases of the occupiers, or the glorious revolutionary past of the Albanian people. It avoided such analysis also because of the age-old anti-Albanian sentiments and aims of the Serbs and of pan-Slav expansionism in general. The Yugoslav leadership maintained the same stand also towards the Albanians of Kosova, whom not only

it did not help to take part fully in the war against the occupier, but on the contrary sabotaged their war, always terrorized, killed and tortured them.

All those whom Tito and the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia sent to us, allegedly to assist us and exchange experience, came with plans prepared in advance, with «directives» which they dictated to us and we were supposed to apply, came as «masters» of the revolution and national liberation war to «their apprentices». Beginning from Blažo Jovanović, Vukmanović-Tempo, Dušan Mugoša, Velimir Stojnić, Nijaz Dizdarević down to those who came after Liberation, Josip Džerdža, Savo Zlatić, Sergej Krajger, General Kuprešanin, and others, their megalomania and arrogance knew no bounds.

We were in opposition to and quarrelled with all these people over many issues of principle, from the first contacts we had with them. Obviously, for our part, this was done over problems of the work and in a comradely way, because we considered many of their ideas and assessments, whether in connection with the situation in the army, the organization of the Party, or the policy of the Party, the Front, and so on, to be incorrect and out of place for us. For their part they hated us and, as emerged clearly from their activity, they studied amongst us the elements most suitable to serve them for the accomplishment of their aims. Hence, the Yugoslav leadership had been at work for a long time and had decided to purge from the ranks of our leadership anyone who opposed their plans so that the way would be open to them.

Especially following the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA in Berat, in November 1944, and throughout the whole period from Liberation on, their anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian struggle and attempts became more open and more ferocious.

It is difficult for those who have not lived especially through the period up to 1948 to understand and form an accura-

to image of that extremely complicated struggle which we had to wage in those years against the Titoites. We had to uncover the subversive struggle which those who posed and advertized themselves as friends were waging against us, to expose the savage sworn enemies, not only of our Party and people, but also of Marxism-Leninism, of the theory and practice of the revolution.

We had just set out on the new course of the construction of the socialist society and, understandably, experience was lacking in this direction. From ignorance mistakes could easily be made, and grasping at this, our «friends» deliberately, for ulterior motives, strove with all their might to confuse us, to put us on a fatally wrong course by offering us their «aid» and «experience». We were to cope with this evil, and we did cope with it, but only at the cost of great toil, effort and sacrifice.

This was our first clash with modern revisionism. But here, too, we lacked experience. The fact that we had these enemies «right inside the house», as you might say, made the struggle even more complicated. We had been gravely betrayed in the trust that we had placed in them, in our communist honesty, and in the proletarian sincerity that we had shown towards them. Indeed, the Titoite spider-web had been spun even within our own ranks. What Tito and his henchmen were unable to achieve from «outside» was made up for by their agents who had long been prepared by Dušan Mugoša, Vukmanović-Tempo and Velimir Stojnić, and had gone on the offensive within the ranks of our top leadership, inside our Political Bureau. Thus, we had to uncover, define accurately and defeat the Titoite plot in conditions not just of the lack of unity in our leadership, but of a fierce struggle which was launched from outside and from inside the sound body of our Party. However, we waged this struggle, too, and crowned it with success.

Fortunately for the future of the Party, the Homeland and socialism in Albania, precisely at the moment when it

seemed that the Titoite plot had gained control of everything, it was exposed and crushed. The relations between us and the Communist Party and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia had reached the point of open hostility. Stalin's letters sent to the CP of Yugoslavia threw light on the anti-Marxist revisionist line and activity of the Tito clique. Many things which Tito and company had done or were doing against our Party and country, now became quite clear to us. The strivings, efforts, mistakes and successes of that struggle would be turned, as they were, into a great school to raise the political and ideological level of our communists and people, into a colossal experience which was to serve us, as it did, in the new battles which would be imposed on us in the future, right down to the present day, destroying even the last cards which the Yugoslav agency kept up its sleeve for better or worse days that might present themselves in the future.

The way in which our Party waged this great and stern struggle to detect and attack Titoite revisionism is a whole history in itself. The whole dialectical process, from the first contacts up to the moment when we broke off all contacts or relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia once and for all, has been analysed and summed up in many main documents and materials of our Party, which belong to that time and the whole of the subsequent period. I personally, as a direct participant in this struggle from its first moments, have gone back over that period again and again. The lessons which we have drawn from that period of clashes and struggle over principles in the ideological, political, economic, organizational and military planes are inexhaustible and will remain permanently valid. The past always serves the present and the future. That is why we are going back over the 6-7 year period when behind «the outstanding leader Tito» we discovered the inveterate renegade Tito, when behind the «internationalism» of Tito and his henchmen we discovered nationalism and chauvinism, when behind their «friendship» we

discovered the bonds of a new enslavement, when behind their «communism» we discovered the revision of Marxism-Leninism in theory and practice.

Subsequently we developed and carried the struggle which we had begun long before against the Yugoslav revisionists further and further forward and we were not nonplussed and did not retreat either in the 50's, when Khrushchev and company took the road of betrayal and embraced Tito, or in the 70's, when Mao Zedong fell on his knees before the old renegade of Belgrade. We did not retreat and were not nonplussed, in 1981, either, following the events in Kosova caused by the savage Great-Serb chauvinist oppression, when in order to cope with the situation in Yugoslavia and among world opinion, Tito's successors hatched up the most monstrous plot to disturb the situation in Albania and to overthrow the sound leadership of our Party, just as the Titoites had wanted to do in Berat, on the eve of the liberation of the country, in November 1944.

For about forty years the Yugoslav revisionists have been wrong and have failed in their open plans and secret plots against Albania, and still they refuse to accept that the citadel of the Party and socialist Albania cannot be taken either from outside, with armies, pressures and provocations of any kind, or from inside, through their agents of any calibre whom they have trained and held in reserve for more than forty years, or have borrowed from the CIA, the KGB, the Intelligence Service, or any other agency.

Our Party has waged and will always wage the ideological struggle against the Yugoslav revisionists consistently, because it is thoroughly acquainted with their real features as anti-Marxists, chauvinists, and inveterate agents of imperialism. The whole history of relations between our Party and the Yugoslav leadership has been and still is a history of unrelenting plots by the Titoite clique for the subjugation of our Party, for the liquidation of the independence of our country,

a history of the heroic resistance of the Party of Labour of Albania and our people to the diabolical plans of this clique and its endless threats and blackmail.

These notes of mine are dedicated precisely to this history, especially to its first period.

July 1982

I

FROM THE FIRST CONTACTS TO THE FIRST DOUBTS AND FRICTIONS

Tito's first letter — a letter of «advice that came too late» ■ The truth on the Titoite claim that allegedly the CPA «is created by the CPY» ■ Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo in Albania: «I have a great idea in my head: it includes Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece». Fierce quarrel with Tempo in the summer of 1943. Koçi Xoxe - Tempo's first «recruit» ■ Tito seeks to preserve the domains of the old Yugoslavia. The question of Istria and the question of Kosova ■ The Bujan Conference in December 1943 ■ Dušan Mugoša crisscrosses Albania and begins recruiting agents for the Yugoslavs.

Our first contacts with the Yugoslav communists indicated a promising beginning. In the autumn of 1941 the Montenegrin internationalist communist, Miladin Popović, was among us.

He had been elected secretary of the newly created Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosova and in the summer of 1941, after an action in Mitrovica, had been arrested by the fascists and sent to an internment camp in Albania. Those were the moments when we, the representatives of the three main communist groups in Albania (of Korça, Shkodra and the «Youth»), had reached agreement, in principle, on founding

the CP of Albania, and one of the first joint actions which we undertook in that period to strengthen the links between the groups was that to free Miladin Popović¹ from the clutches of the fascists. As I have described in detail in the book of memoirs «When the Party Was Born», the action was carried out successfully, and from our first acquaintance with Miladin on, we saw in him a developed communist, with a vigorous militant spirit, a true friend of our Party and people, ready to sacrifice even his life for the advancement of our cause. Miladin Popović lacked experience of a top-level leader, but he lacked neither the determination to learn, nor the readiness to express his opinion with tact and maturity, without any sign of megalomania or tendency to interfere and impose himself upon us. When we became acquainted with these and other qualities of Miladin, of course, our respect for him increased and this automatically increased our respect for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as well. True, until the end of 1942 we had not known or had any kind of direct or indirect contact with any of the leaders of the CPY, but as I said, knowing Miladin, sometimes we said to one another: What developed and experienced cadres there must be in this party when it has a communist like Miladin Popović militating in its ranks!

Also with us at this period was Dušan Mugoša, whom we got to know a little and about whom our first impressions were favourable. It was indisputable that Dušan could not

1 As soon as the Albanian communists were informed that Miladin Popović was in an internment camp in Albania, on the proposal of Comrade Enver Hoxha himself they decided to free him. «To free a communist or cadre of another communist party from an internment camp, — I told the comrades — is an internationalist duty which we cannot and must not shirk,» writes Comrade Enver Hoxha. After his release, Comrade Enver Hoxha writes, «Miladin was glad to find himself amidst his Albanian communist comrades... He expressed his love and admiration for the fraternal Albanian people... He was a Montenegrin, but he judged and valued the virtues of our people as a communist.» (Enver Hoxha, «When the Party Was Born» (Memoirs), Tirana 1962, pp. 118, 124, 2nd Alb. ed.)

be compared with Miladin either for his experience or for his maturity and ability, and even less for any qualities as an organizer or leader. However, no one could blame Dušan for this. He seemed a resolute, active type and liked to go out to the rank-and-file of the Party in the different regions of the country. As soon as he heard that one of our comrades of the Provisional Central Committee was to go to some region, Dušan would ask to go with him «in order to get to know the people at the base and wag my tongue a bit,» as he put it. At that time we saw nothing amiss in this «eagerness» but, on the contrary, were pleased to fulfil his desire. Sometimes the comrades reported to us that in the place he visited he had a mania to be in the limelight, to speak in place and out of place even when he shouldn't have opened his mouth at all; in Vlora he confused the national liberation councils with the soviets,¹ but these things did not arouse our suspicions. «He knows no better, but he doesn't mean any harm,» we thought, proceeding from the good impression we had of him, and tactfully tried to correct what he damaged with his haste, rashness and sectarianism. As I said, however, he stayed with us very little, so our main worry was to keep him from falling into the hands of the enemy through carelessness rather than to consider whether or not there was anything else hidden behind his often surprising actions. In brief, up till the end of 1942 we had the best of impressions and opinions, both about the two Yugoslav comrades that we had amongst us, especially Miladin, and about the CP of Yugoslavia.

Precisely at these moments the news reached us that an emissary of the CC of the CP of Yugoslavia had entered Albania and would soon reach us. His name we did not

1 At a time when reaction was accusing the National Liberation Movement of being sold out to «the Reds», Dušan Mugoša, enthusiastically supported by Mehmet Shehu, demanded that the national liberation councils be called soviets, as in the Soviet Union. The CC of the CPA rejected this demand and issued the order that this term should by no means be used, otherwise, this would help the propaganda of the enemy.

know. We had been told only that he was a cadre who came directly from the main staff of the Yugoslav leadership and was bringing important information for our Party. This news pleased us, because, as I will relate later, we had been waiting for 7 to 8 months for an answer, if not through an emissary, at least in any other possible way, to the request we had made through the Yugoslav leadership to the Comintern for recognition of our new Communist Party. We took all measures to ensure our guest a trip with the least possible danger and in the last days of December 1942 the emissary of the CC of the CPY arrived fit and well in Labinot of Elbasan. He was Blažo Jovanović.

The coming of this delegate to Albania marked the first official contact of the leadership of our Party and of Miladin Popović personally with the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Regrettably, this first contact also marked the beginning of frictions and clashes between our two parties.

Then, who was Tito's first emissary Blažo Jovanović and what did he bring us?

The truth about an absurd claim

At the 1st Consultative Meeting of Activists of the CPA held in April 1942¹ we had decided to inform the Comintern about the founding of the Communist Party of Albania, about the first results in the organization and strengthening of its ranks and its life, and about the general lines of its militant program. On this occasion we presented to the leadership of the Comintern our application for admission of the CPA as a member of the Communist International and the idea that we would organize the 1st National Conference

1 «The History of the Party of Labour of Albania», Tirana 1982, pp. 83-85, Eng. ed.

of the CPA in the near future. We considered that the best way to communicate these decisions and proposals to the Comintern was through the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia and we charged the comrades Vasil Shanto¹ and Dušan Mugoša with the task of carrying them to the Yugoslav leadership. At the same time we expressed the desire that, if possible, the CC of the CPY should send us a delegate to take part as a guest in the 1st National Conference of our Party.

When we informed Dušan Mugoša of the mission with which we had charged him he was walking on air. I thought that what pleased him most was the fact that he was being given the opportunity to meet the main leaders of his party and to boast to them about the extremely difficult and dangerous journey and the important mission with which we had charged him. As for Vasil Shanto, the true master of successful secret actions, he accepted his task with his usual quiet seriousness and set about preparations for the journey.

Thus, we sent the comrades to Yugoslavia in May of that year and to our surprise Vasil Shanto was back in July:

«Have you carried out your task so quickly?» I asked him.

«Only the first part of it!» he told us quietly. «I was only able to carry out the custom of our Highlands. I took Duqi² safe and sound to the point where we made contact with a detachment of Yugoslav partisans in Montenegro, and then he told me: 'You go back! I am going to carry out the mission alone.'»

Although Vasil was a type with very good self-control, generous, and who held nothing back, I noticed a tinge of dissatisfaction in the way he replied to us.

1 One of the former leaders of the communist groups participating in the Founding Meeting of the CPA. At the 1st National Conference of the Party he was elected a candidate member of the CC of the CPA. He was killed in an encounter with the enemy in February 1944 in the vicinity of Shkodra. People's Hero.

2 Pseudonym of Dušan Mugoša.

«It's very good that you've come back,» I said, slapping him on the back, «because here we have so much work!»

«That's all very well, Comrade Taras,»¹ he replied, «but I think that when our Central Committee sent me it had in mind that its important proposals should be taken to the right place by an Albanian communist...»

I, too, felt that Vasil was right but, nevertheless, I did not regard Dušan's behaviour as any grave offence. I thought that his mania to gain the limelight, to undertake «onerous», «special» missions (after all, in the concrete case he was simply a courier), to focus the attention of those whom he would meet on himself alone, etc., were what made him tell Vasil Shanto to «go back». Later I was to be convinced that in this instance, on his strange journeys «around the country» in Albania and in his long «disappearance» for five to six months after his arrival at Tito's staff, sinister aims and actions, carefully thought out and planned by himself and by those who had sent him to us on a mission, were concealed. However, these were things that we were to learn about and appreciate properly later. It was still the beginning, the time when we had not yet had any opportunity to enter into direct relations and contacts with the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia.

And so, after months of waiting, the first delegate of the Yugoslav leadership, Blažo Jovanović, arrived, and true enough, he brought us really important and joyous tidings: the recognition of our Party by the Comintern and the directives of the Executive Committee of the International on our National Liberation War. He also brought a letter from Tito for the CC of our Party and his authorization as representative of the CC of the CPY at the 1st National Conference of the CPA, as well as, if I am not mistaken, one or two pamphlets and, of course, Dušan Mugoša, too.

We received the guest with all the honours possible in the difficult conditions of illegality, and moreover, of a poor

1 One of the pseudonyms of Comrade Enver Hoxha during the National Liberation War.

thatched cottage at Shmil¹. We told him in a comradely way about the state of our work in general and he told us about the situation of the party and the war in Yugoslavia, especially about the difficult situation in Montenegro.

Naturally, on this occasion we thanked him whole-heartedly for undertaking the wearisome and difficult journey to reach us in order to carry out this internationalist duty.

In conversation he seemed attentive and reasonable, and with the exception of one minor friction we had in the first days, everything proceeded smoothly. The friction had to do with what Tito had written and the advice he gave us in his letter.

«Comrade Tito's letter,» said Blažo two or three days after his arrival, «contains instructions and advice which are necessary and important for you. I am aware of what they are and we can discuss them.»

«Yes,» I replied, «we have read the letter and carefully studied the advice of Comrade Tito and we thank him for this. However, Comrade Blažo, you will be staying here till we hold the Conference of our Party. During this time you will see for yourself and become acquainted better with the state of the work here, and I assure you that you will be left unclear about nothing.»

«Very good,» persisted Blažo, «but we are talking about the instructions and advice from Comrade Tito. Do you agree with them or not?!» he asked in a tone as if talking to cadres subordinate to him. (He was a commissar or commander of a partisan unit in Montenegro.)

I had no desire to spoil the friendly atmosphere, so I passed over the bad effect of his question with a laugh, and replied quietly:

«Not only now that our Party is still young, but in the future, too, we will always listen carefully and considerately to the comradely opinions and the advice of friends. Indubitably, this is true of Comrade Tito's letter, too. But, Comrade

¹ Village in the Elbasan district.

Blažo, we understand the circumstances and conditions in which this letter was written. As you yourself are aware, it was written at the end of September, brought to us in December, and refers to problems which were relevant to our Party before April 1942. At the same time, it refers to those problems which we ourselves raised at the 1st Consultative Meeting of the Activists of the Party in April, about which we informed your party through Dušan.»

«Then, according to you, Comrade Tito has merely repeated what you have already raised!» said Blažo, piqued.

«That's not what I said. In the materials we sent to the Comintern, we related how matters stood with us. Judging on this basis, Tito gives us certain advice. We thank him for his concern and interest.»

«Is it only for this you value the letter?» asked Blažo in the same tone.

«Please, don't misunderstand us,» I said. «Now it is January 1943, and obviously we have not been marking time since April 1942. On the contrary, we have tried to solve correctly, not only the problems of that period, but also those which have arisen since, and now, comparing our actions with the directives of the Comintern which you have just brought us, we can only rejoice when we see that we have truly acted as we should have done.»

Continuing the talk, I dwelt concretely on what Tito had written in his letter, explained the development of events and the truth is that Blažo listened to us and was convinced about what we told him. That closed the matter, and for years on end Tito's «first letter» was never mentioned again. Perhaps, it would not have been worth mentioning this letter here, either, but the fact that later the Yugoslav propaganda built it up and published it as a «message which saved the situation», as an «outstanding contribution by Tito in favour of the Albanian Party and the Albanian National Liberation War», etc., etc., impels me to dwell a little on this so-called outstanding document once again.

I must say that the best assessment that can be put on

Tito's first letter¹ is that it amounted to «a letter of advice that came too late». Concretely: in December 1942 (when the letter reached us), Tito «advised» our Party to purge its ranks of the groupist and factionalist elements who had managed to penetrate its ranks and to settle accounts with them!

As everyone knows, at the Consultative Meeting of the Party in April and later at the Special Conference of the Party in June 1942 (when quite likely Tito did not know that the CPA had been formed) we had carried that task right through to the end.

Try to establish links with the representatives of different urban groups and trends and together with them form the National Liberation Front! — was Tito's further advice.

However, both in December 1942, when Tito's letter reached us, and on September 22, 1942, when he sat down and wrote it, his «advice» could only make us smile. We had launched the slogan about the unity of the people on April 7, 1939 and the people and the youth had been raised in demonstrations and protests; in November 1941 the newly-formed Party had issued its first appeal for the unity of the people in the Anti-fascist War, and after it, had issued precise directives and important successes had been achieved in this direction. It is a known historical fact, also, that on September 16, 1942 we had organized the Conference of Peza where the political and organizational foundations of the National Liberation Front and the future of the people's state power were laid, had elected the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council, and the organization of the Front was growing bigger and stronger from day to day!

Naturally, we did not blame Tito for this lack of knowledge of our situation, but neither were we to be blamed for not awaiting his advice and then carrying out the work.

1 This letter is preserved in the Central Archives of the Party. In its unrestrained anti-Albanian propaganda, the Yugoslav leadership itself published this letter, amongst others, in the so-called «White Book on Yugoslav-Albanian Relations». Doc. No. 83, Belgrade 1961.

On the contrary, if we had simply waited for «guidance» from abroad, this would have been an unpardonable sin.

However, while the «instruction» on the question of the Front and, identical with it, that on the question of national liberation councils made us smile, something which followed made us, comrades of the leadership, laugh, and Miladin along with us.

In September 1942 Tito, writing from Glamoć, instructed us, «You must expose the Trotskyite Zai Fundo before the members of the CPA and inform its members that he is an open enemy of the International and the Party!»

This was a case of trying to teach your grandmother to suck eggs! We had exposed Fundo as a Trotskyite as early as in 1939, when he arrived back in Albania, and since that time we had finally settled accounts with him.¹

Probably Tito hasn't known about this and he has written in this way from lack of information, we thought at first.

But then we remembered: We had sent Tito the Resolution of the Founding Meeting of the Party in which Zai Fundo was described openly and clearly as a «declared class enemy». In his letter Tito told us that he had read the Resolution. How could this be? Had he not read that paragraph? Or since he had to write something, had he written the first thing that came to mind?! Very surprising! However, we were to be even more astonished over the Tito-Fundo problem in September 1944. Our forces of the National Liberation Army which were fighting for the liberation of northern Albania captured Zai Fundo in a gang of bandits headed by Gani Kryeziu and a British officer. We gave the order that Fundo should receive the sentence he deserved. Quite unexpectedly that same Tito and his henchmen who, in 1942 gave us advice which came too late that we should settle accounts with Fundo, now came out in his defence and even demanded that we handed him over to them.

How we acted on this occasion I have described else-

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania» (Memoirs), Tirana 1962, pp. 313-334, Eng. ed.

where, including the book «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania», so there's no need to dwell on it. Here we are considering the letter of 1942. It was like this from beginning to end — a letter of advice that came too late. Right at the end, however, almost in passing, as an «afterthought», Tito made this request: «The resolution which you will compile at the Conference should be as short as possible... Likewise, send us the biographies of the new members of the Central Committee, together with their names, because we have to send them to the Comintern.» (?)

This request made an impression on us. We asked one another whether the Comintern could really need the biographies of the members of the Central Committee of the CPA(?), but since we did not know how to explain this, we found the «reason»: Tito knows about such things! Perhaps he has instructions to this effect!

This, then, is all there was to Tito's letter which the Yugoslav propaganda builds up as an «important contribution» to our Party's pursuing a correct line! This they present as an «argument» in support of their claim that the growth of the CPA was allegedly due to them! But their blindness and irrestrainable chauvinist instincts lead them to self-exposure. Had they been more cool-headed, even simply in regard to their hostile claim, they would never have mentioned this letter.

It is incontestable evidence of the fact that, at least until the end of 1942, when the letter reached us, the Communist Party of Albania had not had any assistance, any instruction or any directive from the CC of the CPY. At the same time, it shows that even the «advice» and «instructions» at the end of 1942 arrived in Albania too late to affect the issues and, consequently, were no longer of any value.

But let us return to the beginning of 1943, to the days when we had Blažo Jovanović amongst us, and examine his «contribution» to our work. After he transmitted to us what they had told him to say, the fact is that he displayed discretion and «sat on the sidelines», you might say, waiting to carry out the last task for which he had been

sent: to bring greetings on behalf of the CC of the CPY to the 1st National Conference of our Party. He saw for himself that we were engaged in the war and in work day and night, saw the trips that we made back and forth between Elbasan and Tirana, with our heads at stake, the meetings and contacts that we organized, and the fact is he never showed any sign of dissatisfaction. Naturally, there were occasions when he, too, became involved in the talks we held on one problem or the other, when we asked him something about one of the problems we were going to deal with in the reports to the Conference, and he expressed his opinion frankly. The things he said were not particularly brilliant and I was soon convinced that, about the problems of organization, in particular, and the leadership and life of the party as a whole, he did not know much. Perhaps the fact that he had been engaged mainly in military problems explains this. However, during the whole period up to the Conference Blažo never exceeded his authority, did not try to impose anything on us, just as he had nothing to contribute when we asked him. In brief, he spent 2-3 months with us in normal relations, often without making his presence felt at all, but nevertheless in a friendly atmosphere.

And this same Blažo Jovanović gets up at the 1st National Conference,¹ amongst the delegates from all parts of Albania, and, quite unexpectedly, drops a gem:

«Two Yugoslav communists created the Communist Party of Albania!»

He was referring to Miladin Popović and Dušan Mugoša.

Miladin Popović did not allow the very serious impression

¹ It was held on March 17-22, 1943 at Labinot in the vicinity of Elbasan and was the 1st Conference of the Party. The question of the preparation of the people for the general armed uprising and its organization occupied the main place in its proceedings. It decided on the creation of the Albanian National Liberation Army and elected the Central Committee of the CPA, its Political Bureau and its General Secretary, Comrade Enver Hoxha. (See: «The History of the PLA», Tirana 1982, pp. 102-114, Eng. ed.).

that this crazy statement made to last long. As soon as Blažo finished speaking, Miladin Popović stood up and addressed both him and us:

«No one should ever imagine,» stressed Miladin amongst other things, «that we two members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia created the Communist Party of Albania. No, the truth is that you yourselves, the Albanian communists, created the Communist Party of Albania, and if there has to be any mention of my role, or the role of anyone else from outside, that is nothing but what in the relations between sister parties is called internationalist fraternal aid and support. You would have created your Communist Party in any case, as you did, even if we had not been here.»¹

At this firm declaration Blažo Jovanović went pale and pursed his lips, but he never opened his mouth, either at that moment or during the few days he stayed after we ended the Conference.

Despite our surprise and the very bad impression which he aroused with his allegation, we ourselves did not give importance to such a statement, which seemed to us, as the communists we were and in the way we conceived matters, merely a chance aberration, therefore we did not see any sense in delving any further into how and why such a statement slipped from Blažo's mouth. By this time we knew both his capacity and his nature and we thought that this absurdity could be regarded simply as one of those preposterous things and theses he put forward from time to time.

Nevertheless, a series of doubts arose in our minds. Blažo had spent more than two months amongst us, we had talked with him time and again, and as I said, we had had one friction with him. How did it come about that this gaffe did not escape him during these two months or so, but precisely at the 1st Conference of the Party?! Had it been simply an expression or «idea» that had «suddenly» occurred to him, then it would have been more natural for it to have arisen in

¹ From the minutes of the 1st National Conference of the CPA,

a chance conversation or argument. Whereas he said it precisely, not when he was speaking or arguing in his own name, but when he was delivering a greeting on behalf of the CC of the CP of Yugoslavia. Then, was it just a slip, or was Blažo instructed to let it drop, as though by accident, in the main forum of our Party?

However, these were only doubts which arose in our minds those days and we had no other reason or fact which would make us think that the allegation was not Blažo's own. In the letter which I mentioned, Tito did not make even the remotest allusion in this direction, while Blažo himself, after Miladin's immediate reply, closed his mouth tight, and we left it at that in the belief that it was simply an aberration of the delegate.

Matters were to develop and the day would come when we would be convinced that both the bad impression and our doubts of March 1943 aroused by Blažo Jovanović's allegation were not without foundation. Thus, the day would come when Tito and his henchmen, in the course of all sorts of savage accusations and slanders against us, would openly publicize one of their most absurd and unscrupulous claims — the claim that they, the Yugoslavs, had allegedly formed the Communist Party of Albania!

From the moment when this claim was first made openly down to this day we have rejected this fabrication of the Titoites, not only with indignation, as such a crazy claim deserves, but also with calm arguments we have explained the whys and wherefores of things, and in particular, we have uncovered and denounced the sinister megalomaniacal and hegemonic aims lurking behind it. All the documents of our Party which refer to this claim are proof of this. I personally, in a series of speeches, reports, articles and in my notes, have dealt extensively with the truth about it. However, since our relations with the Titoites are the main subject of these notes and reminiscences, I consider it reasonable to dwell once again on the truth about this claim. The fact that this claim has served the Titoites as the basis, as the central

pillar upon which all their anti-Albanian activity and propaganda has been built up, makes this even more necessary.

In the first place, the 'Titoites' claim that they allegedly created the Communist Party of Albania cannot stand from the **viewpoint of theory, of principle**. In this respect it is a blatant violation of the law of development of communist parties in general, and the principles on which they are born, created and strengthened in particular.

We know that Marxism-Leninism always regards the internal cause, the internal factor, as the main determining factor in the birth and evolution of every phenomenon. The process of the birth and formation of a communist party can never be an exception to this law, hence, the process of the founding of our Communist Party cannot be an exception to it, either. Had the internal factor, the Albanian factor, not existed, had the internal conditions not existed and been ripe for it, a communist party could not have been created here, either with two or ten Yugoslav communists, or even if the whole Yugoslav leadership had come to Albania. Hence, the CPA was not created because of the whim or demand of a certain Tito from Yugoslavia, but it was created because the Albanian people, the Albanian communist movement, which had been striving for this result for more than a decade, demanded its birth as something indispensable, the historical moment through which the country was passing, the past, the present and the future of Albania itself demanded it.¹

Another fact which testifies to this: when Tito and company were allegedly so «strong» and «capable» that they could create a communist party in Albania «from outside», why did they not do this, let us say, in 1935, 1937, 1939, or in 1940?! Was it only in 1941 that they «discovered» that on the borders of Yugoslavia there was Albania which was waiting for the «creator» Tito to say, «Let there be the

1 «The History of the Party of Labour of Albania», Tirana 1982, pp. 48-74, Eng. ed.

party», just as, according to the Bible, the world waited for the «great creator» to say, «Let there be light»?!

If there is anything further to be said on this aspect of the problem, then it is no fault of ours that there is only room for irony. The absurdity of such «creators» deserves nothing else.

In the concrete case, the Titoites' claim collapses not only from the theoretical viewpoint. The very practice of the founding of the Communist Party of Albania is another argument which is a slap in the face for them. It is truly ridiculous that on the one hand, the Titoite build up the «gigantic» claim that they «created» the Communist Party of Albania, while, on the other hand, in proof of this, they bring out a lilliputian «argument»: the fact that the Yugoslav communist, Miladin Popović, and, as his interpreter and associate, Dušan Mugoša attended and took part in the Founding Meeting of our Party.

Our Party has never concealed or denied the presence of these two comrades at the Founding Meeting and subsequently, just as it has never hidden or denied anything else about their stay and work in Albania. It is Tito and company who have deliberately hidden and denied the most important aspects of this problem. Concretely:

First, the Yugoslav leadership has always passed over in silence the fundamental fact that Miladin Popović was not sent to Albania either by Tito, or by the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia. He emerged from the ranks of Montenegrins-Albanians and had gone underground in Kosova. In the summer of 1941 he was arrested by the Italian fascists and sent to Albania, to the internment camp at Peqin. We carried out an operation to release him from internment, and this occurred precisely at those moments when we, the representatives of the three main communist groups, had reached agreement to hold a meeting to found the Communist Party of Albania. As I have described in detail in the book of memoirs «When the Party Was Born», at that period we had taken the initiative to make contact with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and expressed the desire that it should

send us a comrade to attend and to assist us in the great event we had before us. Since it chanced that we liberated Miladin Popović and he was in Albania, we asked him to stay for a time as a «third», neutral party amongst us. After we reached agreement with him, we also sought authorization from the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia. About the end of October 1941 Dušan Mugoša brought its authorization and, after this, Miladin Popović linked himself more closely with us in our work, and in this context also took part in the Founding Meeting.

Second, not only was Miladin Popović not sent to us from Tito's staff, but he took part in our Founding Meeting **without having any orientation, directive, instruction, etc.** from the Yugoslav leadership about any «special role» in this event. It was we ourselves, the Albanian communists, participants in the Meeting, who guided and ran its proceedings from start to finish as Marxism-Leninism taught us. There we had no «orientations» or «instructions» of any kind from outside, either from the Yugoslav party, or even from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or any other party. Up till now at least, even the anti-Albanian propaganda of the Titoites has never fabricated any «document» to «prove» the opposite.

Then, how could a communist party have been created by a member of another party, moreover, when he had not been directly delegated by this party and had no directions or instructions from it?!

Only the logic of Titoites can unravel this.

Third, as I mentioned above, and as he proved throughout his entire stay in Albania, Miladin himself **never assumed «merits» which did not and could not belong to him.** On the contrary, with indignation and determination he rejected any allusion or cunning flattery which Tito's delegates tried to make in order to attribute to him a role which, not even a whole party, let alone one person, could perform from outside.

In short, only those who could and whose duty it was, the Albanian communists, founded the Communist Party of Albania.

The Yugoslavs' claim on this problem, then, is nothing but the assumption of undeserved merits.

However, the permanent persistence of the Belgrade revisionists to assume a role which does not belong to them should not be seen simply as their mania to boast, to win fame, to use this as another shiny medal on their chest covered with decorations for «great heroic deeds». No, as a whole history has proved, they assumed the role of the «creators» of the CPA with the aim that their «creature» should behave towards them like an infant to its parent, be educated and raised in their spirit and, hence, become a blind and obedient tool in the service of the «mother party» — the CP of Yugoslavia. The whole history of the relations of the CPA with the CPY, especially beginning from the summer of 1943 up to the beginning of 1948 and later, is a history of the struggle against the aims, attempts and plots of the CPY and the Yugoslav state to subjugate and enslave our Party and the new Albanian people's state, a history of the heroic resistance of the leadership of our Party and state, not only to avoid subjugation, but also to attack the betrayal openly, ceaselessly and without any hesitation. This we shall examine later.

Here it is in order to point out that, just as the Yugoslav pretension about who created the CPA is absurd and without any foundation, their other pretension, that our Party is allegedly indebted to the CP of Yugoslavia for its growth, strengthening and line during the years of the National Liberation War, is equally absurd and without foundation. This pretension, too, they base on the role of their emissaries in Albania.

As I have stated, up till the end of 1942 neither the leadership of the CPA, Miladin, nor anyone else amongst us had had any kind of contact, had received any kind of letter or material from the CPY, in fact, we hadn't even any information about what the comrades of the sister party were doing, and how matters stood with them.

With this I do not want to imply in any way that we were annoyed because for a year or so they showed no signs of life and gave us no kind of help. No, we could imagine

the difficult conditions in which they had to fight, and it was our heartfelt desire and wish that things would go as well as possible with them for the good of the fraternal Yugoslav peoples, for the good of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and for the good of the liberation war of the world anti-fascist coalition. Naturally, I do not want to imply, either, that we did not feel the need for an exchange of experience with comrades of the same ideal, especially in the conditions when our Party was young, the comrades without any experience, and the conditions in which we fought extremely difficult.

But to do nothing and to pretend that you have done everything, as is the concrete case with the leadership of the CPY, this we have not accepted and never will accept.

To convince people about their «contribution», Tito's spokesmen were also to talk about the role of Blažo Jovanović, especially at the 1st National Conference of the CPA. This is a claim which should not even be mentioned by people with pure hearts and sound judgment. With the exception of what he said about the creation of the CPA, Blažo Jovanović made no other «contribution», even for those who had sent him, let alone for us.

We Albanian communists, now organized in the ranks of a Party with more than a year's experience in the fire of the war, had undertaken the work for the preparation and holding of the 1st Conference of the Party and we carried it through to the end, as we did with everything else. I have described in detail the work that we did for this Conference¹, therefore

1 In the book «When the Party Was Born» (Memoirs) Comrade Enver Hoxha, among others writes: «We had set the task of convening this Conference at the appropriate time and moment, as early as at the Founding Meeting of the Party. Prior to this the question of this Conference was also taken up at the meetings of party activists... and this was accompanied with the intensification of actions and fighting in the villages and cities, with the increase of the ranks of partisan detachments and units, with the further strengthening of the national liberation councils, with greater and more intense political and ideological work with the broad masses of the people, etc.»

it is unnecessary to repeat what is already known. I want only to add something: later, especially in the grave situation which Tito's men created before and during the Berat Plenum, in November 1944, amongst other things they accused me, as well as others, of a «grave» mistake which we had allegedly permitted at the 1st National Conference — the procedure followed in the election of the Central Committee of the Party!

And what was this «mistake» that was exaggerated so much that Tito's emissary Velimir Stojnić shook his finger at us so hard as soon as he arrived in Albania, at the end of August 1944, that we wondered what terrible thing we had done?!

The truth is that the way in which we acted over the elections at the 1st National Conference of the CPA was not any great mistake, especially in the conditions of that time, and the main thing is that we had no ulterior motive in the procedure we followed. The candidates were proposed to the delegates not by name, but, for reasons of security, by description of their characteristics. They went like this: a comrade is proposed who has these or those qualities, has these or those good points or weaknesses, has this past, has inclinations to this sector, has weaknesses in this direction, etc. The delegates approved those who seemed to them the best.

Even if we assume that this procedure may have been wrong, after all, this was an internal matter for our Party and was imposed on us by the conditions of deep illegality.

The important thing was the fact that we proceeded from the principle that each communist is a leader and we sincerely believed that mentioning not names, but qualities, was more democratic and with less possibility of subjective judgment. This, we reasoned, was the best way, and this is what we did. At the same time, we admit that we did not have the necessary experience of the procedure of elections to such high forums. It never occurred to us, or to Miladin, that we were acting wrongly. The only person among us who had experience

in this matter was Blažo Jovanović, but he told us nothing. However, time was to make clear that Tito and his emissaries would seize on this «mistake», not because the violation of the «rules of procedure» on our part was painful to them. The main reason lay elsewhere: by acting in this way, keeping the names secret in the elections, Tito's demand that we should send him the names and surnames and biographies of the members of our Central Committee could not be fulfilled in the way he wanted.

Precisely on this point we had unwittingly trodden on Tito's toes and, when he sent Stojnić to Albania later, he did not forget to instruct him to rap our knuckles over the «mistake» of March 1943.

Matters reached such a point that when Nako Spiru, Koçi Xoxe, Sejfulla Malëshova¹ and others associated themselves with Stojnić, this «procedural mistake» completely overshadowed the indisputable success of the Conference itself. As is known, the organization of the Conference was in order and the delegates were elected according to all the norms of democratic procedure, despite the difficult circumstances. The spirit of the reports and the contributions to the discussion were more than healthy, each delegate had the right to speak, to ask questions, to interject, to discuss, to criticize and to propose.

However, Tito's accusation over «the election procedure» belongs to another period about which I will speak in detail later. Here I want only to emphasize the truth that, including the 1st National Conference of the CPA, that is, up until the end of March 1943, the aid of the CC of the CPY for our Party was totally non-existent. Of course, we would never

¹ He came to Albania in the beginning of the spring of 1943. Capitalizing on the fact that since the end of 1924 he had been a political emigré and had spent most of the time of his emigration in the Soviet Union, after his return to Albania he posed as the emissary of the Comintern and pretended that what he said was the official opinion of Moscow.

have mentioned such a thing of Tito and his henchmen, if, for their part, they had not loudly trumpeted claims to the contrary.

Tito's «roving ambassador» spins the threads of the web over the Balkans

We had just successfully concluded the proceedings of the 1st National Conference and were engaged in carrying out the great tasks that the Conference placed before us. The delegates had gone back to the regions, the çetas* and battalions. Likewise, after they had received the necessary instructions and directions, most of the comrades elected to the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party had gone to the base to give the work there their direct guidance. Precisely during one of these days, when I was working on a material (it seems to me I was making the final corrections to the text of the Resolution of the Conference), suddenly and in totally unknown circumstances, a Yugoslav popped up in Labinot of Elbasan. I say «popped up», not so much for the fact that until that moment we did not know who this person was, where he came from, where he was going in those difficult times or why, but more especially because of the endless problems, the tangles, the accusations and traps which he created for us from the moment we met him and for years on end subsequently. An anti-Albanian and anti-Marxist of the first water, a frenzied Great-Serb chauvinist, brutal and a power-seeker, this is how he would seem to us when he turned up three or four months after our first meeting, again in the difficult autumn of that year, and again in 1945 and 1947. This political gangster (in calling him this

* fighting units

I am not exaggerating at all), who in the spring and summer of 1943 was suddenly to push his way into the leadership of the Party and sow the seeds of disruption and diversion, just as «suddenly» after Liberation was to find the way to push himself into and dictate to the supreme organs of our army. Years were to go by, matters were to take the course they did and when we had completely forgotten him, just as unexpectedly as in March of 1943, he was to turn up again on another black night, this time thousands of kilometres from Albania, in Moscow. One night, well after midnight, the telephone was to ring insistently and the voice of Anastas Mikoyan informed me that Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo¹, the man of March 1943, was seeking a meeting with me!

Very soon I was to be convinced that his frowning self-important attitude at the moment of introduction had not arisen from the fact that I kept him waiting for some time (as I said, I was working on a material). No, this was his permanent nature.

«On my way back from Macedonia and the Greek zones en route for Montenegro and Kosova, I heard you were here. Let's see what these Albanians are doing, I thought, and decided to pay you a short visit,» he said solemnly and waited apparently for me to express my thanks. I merely remained silent in order to let him know that he ought to correct the expression... «these Albanians».

But this made no impression on him. He told us (in confidence!) that he was the main delegate of the CPY and the General Staff of the Yugoslav NLA for Macedonia and went on:

«Since Macedonia, on account of its past and present history, is the key problem of the Balkans, I am more or less obliged to involve myself with all these territories where Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Albania and Serbia converge. The times are difficult and the problems are extremely difficult, but we can't help that, we'll come out on top,» he

¹ Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, pp. 135-139, Eng. ed.

ended his introduction with that same tone with which he had started and began to look around to see what effect the knowledge of all this «heavy burden» that history had placed on the shoulders of this 30-year old, had made on us!

Conceited and haughty, this was the first impression that struck my mind there and then about «the man of the Balkans». However, he had come as a guest and perhaps fatigue and the struggle against difficulties had worn him out and he had lost control of himself for a moment. So, to soften the atmosphere, I began to speak. I thanked him for the chance visit he was paying us, told him that it was a joy for us when we met communists from sister parties and, regardless of the functions they performed in their own parties, we considered the exchange of opinions with them mutual aid, and better acquaintance with one another, very important.

«I don't want to detain you long because you have a long way to go,» I told him and added, «but there is one thing you should bear in mind: if you have occasion to pass through Albania again, don't take unnecessary risks, as you have done this time. We would not like to hear that the fascists had captured a communist from a sister party somewhere in Albania, especially in the case of a comrade with all those responsibilities you mentioned to us. 'Surrender' to us,» I said laughing, «and our comrades, who are everywhere, will take you wherever you have to go.»

It was plain that this pleased him. He thanked me for the offer of assistance and immediately added:

«I am always travelling from one place to another. I hadn't planned this meeting, but some knowledge of the situation in your country would be of great help to me in my work. We can also exchange opinions about the situation in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece. I have come from there and I believe that their problems are not without interest for you. Do you agree?!»

We had no reason to oppose a free exchange of opinions. Moreover, after my words, it seemed that he toned down his bragging somewhat.

I started by giving him a brief picture of the life and activity of our Party from the time of its founding, told him something about the work with the Front, with the national liberation councils, as well as about the çetas, battalions and other partisan units. I dwelt a little more extensively on the proceedings of the 1st National Conference of the Party and its very important decisions, especially about the new, higher phase which our war had entered, about the organization and strengthening of our National Liberation Army, about the creation of the General Staff of the Army in the near future, etc.

Not without purpose, I spoke to him in a very quiet and sincere way, bearing in mind to point out the successes achieved and the struggle waged for them, as well as the shortcomings and weaknesses observed and our critical stand towards them. I acted in this way in order to pave the way for our guest and let him understand that this is the spirit in which we talked to comrades and that we expected the same comradely spirit from them. But all this remained only a pious wish.

«From the exposé which the comrade General Secretary gave us,» began Tempo as if he were speaking at some meeting between parties, «I see that you have made progress. I am pleased about this. I have some comments (I think Ramadan Çitaku was translating) about your work up to date, but first, I want to give you a picture of the situation in Macedonia and of how the Bulgarian and Greek communists understand the character of the war.»

From all the things he prattled about in this first conversation, as well as on two or three other occasions during the summer of that year, he wanted to present himself, not simply as an «expert» on Balkan problems, but as a «great politician» of the Balkans, as a person who was in a position, there and then, to reach «conclusions and take stands of decisive importance»! Both from the tone in which he spoke and from the cut-and-dried manner in which he issued his phrases, as though they were «the last word», he gave the impression that you were facing a man who held all the

strings of the Balkans in his hands and that the present and future of the countries of this region depended on him alone!

We were very unfavourably impressed by this person's open lack of respect towards the leaders of the two sister parties of Bulgaria and Greece, as well as by his use, from beginning to end, of the term «stereotyped» and «stereotypism». We were soon to learn what he was getting at.

«The Bulgarian comrades,» he told us among other things, «do not act according to the existing situation, but imitate the experience of the past, learned from books in a stereotyped way. They are waiting for strikes and demonstrations to break out in the cities, as in Russia in 1917, and then they will begin the next phase, the armed insurrection! This means to put an end to the war against the occupiers before it has even begun. And the Greeks are doing the same thing. They have concentrated on the cities alone and expect to seize power later through parliamentary discussions. These things are asinine!» he exclaimed without the slightest embarrassment (we were soon to get used to this vocabulary which this Serbo-Montenegrin had on the tip of his tongue). «Everybody knows,» he continued, «that a person with any brains ought to see a bit further than the end of his own nose, but not in a stereotyped way, not failing to see or underrating what, you might say, is right under his nose. I am referring,» he said, all arrogance, «to the experience of our Party and our General Staff. We are in the mountains, we are waging the great war without waiting for the Bulgarians' and the Greeks' strikes and demonstrations! This is the example that should be followed, especially in the Balkans,» he said; «and we are not going to keep it from anybody!»

He paused for a moment and then he turned to me:

«So, I am pleased that you, too, have begun the war in the mountains, the partisan war. This is a good sign, but you must speed things up. You are still in the stage of çetas and guerrilla units. Forget about the guerrilla units in the cities, fill the mountains with partisans because, I tell you,

if the struggle is concentrated in the cities alone, then you fall into stereotypism, blindly copy the experience of others, whatever the revolution it is the experience of. . .»

This communist braggard was flying very high. Was it his custom to speak with such brutal arrogance or did he consider us «juniors» and think that he could say whatever came into his head to us? I could not permit him to go on like this, in that tone and with those words. I interrupted him:

«We do not know the sister parties of Bulgaria and Greece at first hand and we have not had the occasion and possibility to know their current situation in detail. For this reason I do not consider it in order,» I continued, «for us even to speak about them and their line here. However, since you have had your say, I have to tell you my opinion.»

«I raised this only as an example with no intention of discussing them,» Tempo tried to excuse himself. «This is simply a free conversation.»

«And I shall speak freely, too,» I said and continued: «For them as two communist parties, members of the Comintern, we have always nurtured the same feelings and opinions as for your party and for any other communist party. For such leaders as Comrade Dimitrov in particular, we have always had the best of opinion. I tell you this because the way you speak about the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party simply astonishes us.»

«We, too, have respect for Comrade Dimitrov,» put in Tempo, «but in the concrete instance even he is for pursuing a stereotyped line on the question of the war against the occupiers. Perhaps this comes about because he works in Moscow in the Comintern and is acquainted with no other experience than that of earlier revolutions and the war of the Red Army. Precisely here stereotypism. . .»

«You make much use of the term 'stereotype', and from what I can see, with this you imply, first of all, the experience of the October Revolution. Or am I mistaken?!» I said bluntly.

«In some ways I mean that, too, but let us understand. . .»

«Excuse me,» I interrupted, «but for us the October Revolution and all its experience is something sacred. Perhaps we have not gone into matters quite as deeply as you,» I said, not without irony, «but one thing we know very well: the revolution, especially the October Revolution, is a great thing, a name, a world phenomenon which, above all, means the radical overturning of society. It does not include only strikes and demonstrations, as you said, but above all, it contains in itself the final struggle with such authoritarian means as rifles, artillery and machine-guns. Hence, for us, the revolution is a struggle which is developed gradually and uninterruptedly through all its forms, methods and means, from the most elementary to the general armed insurrection.»

«We don't deny these things,» he interjected, «but you are going into theory. I was talking about the present war.»

«That's what I am speaking about, too,» I said, «and by no means simply in the field of theory. I want to tell you that in our whole line we base ourselves on and learn from the irreplaceable experience of the October Revolution above all, of course, while trying to acquaint ourselves with it as thoroughly as possible and to adopt it in conformity with the time, circumstances and conditions of the situation today.»

I noticed that he was waiting impatiently for me to finish. He was drumming irritably and impatiently on his boots with a twig of wild cherry.

«This is a complete misunderstanding,» he said. «I was referring to something else, but let us leave these things. The problem is that...»

«And I also have something to say in connection with what you said about the Bulgarian comrades, especially about Comrade Dimitrov,» I persisted. «I repeat that we have had no direct contacts with them and have no concrete knowledge of the state of affairs with them. However, I think that you are wrong when you say that Comrade Dimitrov is against the immediate development in breadth of the armed struggle against the nazi-fascist occupation.»

«I spoke about what I saw and heard,» Tempo interjected.

«A few months ago,» I objected, «we received the directives of the Comintern about the line of our Party in the National Liberation War. I am certain that in defining the instructions and directives that the Comintern issues, Comrade Dimitrov has his say and a major place.»

«Indisputably!» said Tempo. «He is engaged directly with the Comintern.»

«How then,» I asked, «are we to understand what you said, when, in the directives which are sent to us, we are not told 'wait in the cities', 'busy yourselves only with strikes', but are told 'develop and deepen the war, mobilize all the forces in the armed struggle against the fascist occupiers'?!»

Tempo's face went red, however he still persisted in his opinion, while stressing that he did not know the directives that had come to us, but knew «the concrete reality in the line of the Bulgarian comrades».

I did not allow him to say any more about the others and he himself drew in his horns, while repeating that he did not open up that theme in order «to speak ill of third parties», but simply for a «consultation between comrades».

The time came for him to issue «some comments» about our work. From the first «comments» I saw that he was not so uninformed about our situation as he had pretended to be at first. After saying a few things perfunctorily and «sweetening us up» with some talk about our successes, he found it in order to list his «comments»:

«First,» he said, «sectarian tendencies and stands have been displayed by the Party over collaboration with and approaches to strata and groups of individuals with influence among the people; second, the liberation character of the war should be linked more closely with the problem of the elimination of the old regime, hence, with the creation of national liberation councils; third, the partisan çetas and units should not be considered 'çetas of the Party'; fourth,...»

«We should denounce the Trotskyite Zai Fundo, as an enemy of the Party!» I interjected there and then.

Tempo was shocked and dumbfounded by my interjection, but quickly tried to recover himself.

«Yes,» he said, «I was going to speak about him, too!»

«Comrade Tempo,» I said quietly, «these things that you are mentioning to us, we have read two or three months ago in the letter which Comrade Tito sent us and we have discussed them at length with Blažo. It seems that you, too, have been well-informed about them. We can only be pleased about this general interest of yours in our problems.»

«Why, don't you want us to be interested?» he asked irritably. «Have you no need for aid? Or do you consider our comments out of order?»

Very briefly I told him what we had discussed and what we thought about those things which Tito wrote and, in order to take him down a peg or two, I told him bluntly:

«In principle those comments might have some basis, but we received them too late. They reached us when those things no longer existed as problems for us. It is of even less value to talk about them now.»

«Perhaps,» said Tempo, «but when you were speaking at first about the line of the Party, you continuously mentioned the term 'our partisan units', or 'our çetas'. You are speaking as General Secretary of the Party, are you not?»

«I certainly am!»

«Then it turns out that you, too, consider the çetas and battalions as 'units of the Party'! Precisely this is a mistake of a sectarian character. They are the armed forces of the people, not simply of the Party...»

«Let us not play with words,» I interrupted him. «When we say 'our units and çetas', we always have in mind the people and the Party. Of course, they are armed forces of the people, because the people — the peasants, the workers and the youth, are filling their ranks. But,» I continued, «we do not in any way consider it a mistake, in fact we cannot even distinguish the mistake you see, when we link the çetas and other partisan units closely with the Party. Our Communist Party is the sole creator, the irreplaceable or-

ganizer and leader of them. We inherited nothing from the old army of the ex-king, not even a squad of soldiers, let alone larger units. Thus, all the forces which have gone to the mountains are the fruit of the correct line of our Party, which has created them, and in this direction we are not wrong when we call the partisan units ours. Now we have other major tasks ahead of us: we are going to organize big fighting units, starting from brigades, and are about to set up the General Staff of our National Liberation Army. We can never conceive these formations and organs apart from the Party, apart from its role as founder and leader.»

This person with whom I was talking had a strange habit: whenever he felt himself in a tight spot, he would say, «All right, all right», and immediately hop off arrogantly to some other subject. This is what happened in all the talks we held with him.

«I don't deny the role of the Party, but it is a mistake to speak like that, because it appears as if the units are comprised only of communists,» he put in.

«That's absurd,» I said. «There are many fighters in our getas and battalions and their ranks are increasing ceaselessly. How can it be thought they are all communists! No, Comrade Tempo, this could not happen. The communists are the vanguard, the forefront of the fighters, they are their outstanding leaders, but not the whole effective of fighters.»

«Then it turns out, at least, that your staffs are comprised only of communists! This, too, is a criticism we have for you. Since it is a people's army, non-communist elements ought to be included in the staffs, and this work should not be left in the hands of communists only.»

«There's no basis for this 'criticism', either,» I retorted. «Indeed, I can tell you that most of the leading bodies of our military units are not comprised of communists, but honest patriots, fighters who want the freedom and independence of the Homeland and who have consciously embraced the line of our Communist Party. Naturally, in all this work we stress as the main thing the fact that the central staff, the

leading staff which determines the line, which leads the Front, the work of the national liberation councils and the entire war, is the Party. This we do not deny. On the contrary, we consider it the fundamental factor and the main victory we have achieved.»

Soon I was to be convinced that it was not the way in which we operated in the Front, the work with the nationalists, or the role of communists and elements not organized in the Party, in the staffs, that Tempo was worrying about. He repeated the things we had read in Tito's letter apparently to show us that «he knew how to make concrete criticism», but after our objections he did not enter into debate. He had something else at the back of his mind.

«Big staffs must be created without fail,» he said, continuing the talk, «because we can't do without them! You, Comrade Enver, said that the leading, central staff is the Party. I agree, but the party is the party while the staff is the staff! The latter has its own functions and role, especially in the direction of following up and co-ordination of the fighting actions. You have remained at the stage of staffs of *çetas* and battalions. You have delayed too long. Where are your brigade staffs, where is your General Staff?!»

«We're listening to you, Comrade Tempo,» I broke in abruptly, «but, please remember where you are speaking and why you are speaking. I told you in a comradely way about the development of the war and of our partisan formations up to the 1st National Conference. Likewise, I told you about the concrete tasks which the Conference set in the direction of the creation of bigger fighting formations, and in this context, also about the formation of the General Staff of our army in the near future.»

«But where are they!» he interrupted again with an impatience which I could not understand.

«In the mountains!» I said raising my voice. «In the villages and cities of Albania, everywhere that a whole people, with their Party at the head, are being organized, mobilized and are fighting. Don't you concern yourself, Comrade Tempo,

about whether our affairs are going properly. Everything will be done as it should, at the proper time, and not just as I, you, or anybody else fancies.»

«I understand, I understand, Comrade Enver,» he suddenly softened his tone, «but look how matters stand: for some time I've been turning over a great idea in my head. It includes Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece.»

«Since it includes the whole of the Balkans it really is a big idea,» I jibed gently.

«Yes, the whole of the Balkans!» he repeated without hiding his satisfaction and continued, «I have an idea in my head about a big staff, a staff above the staffs, as you might say, a universal organization. Do you understand?»

«I'm listening, I'm listening,» I replied to avoid saying I could not agree with what he was telling me.

«This staff,» he continued, «will be an *inter-Balkan* staff, or let us call it a *Balkan* staff for short, and I think it should be comprised of representatives of the general staffs of all the Balkan countries. It would be charged with important functions, would...»

I felt this was not the time for sarcasm, or for taking what he said lightly. Therefore, I pulled myself together to listen with all the attention that his «idea» deserved. Apparently he noticed the sudden change in my attitude and he immediately lowered the euphoric tone of what he was saying:

«Let us be quite clear,» he said, «that I mentioned these things to you only because I chanced to pass through these parts. I'm still turning over the idea in my head, you might say, as a draft-idea. I've exchanged some opinions with a comrade of the Greek party and with one of the Bulgarian party, but I mentioned it to them, too, just like this, in passing. I only wanted to set them thinking. The idea still needs time to mature. I have to elaborate it, then we shall put it forward in the proper way. But,» he continued, «to round off this talk which we have had, I still insist on what I said earlier: you must create your staffs, especially the General Staff, as soon as

possible. This has great importance. Assuming for a moment that we reach agreement with the Bulgarian and Greek comrades that we should concretize the idea of the 'Balkan Staff', assuming that you agree, too, how are you to take part in it when you still do not have your General Staff?! This is what I was getting at,» he said and looked up at me to see my reaction.

«The main thing is that we must have the leading staff, the Party,» I told him. «With it at the head, the commands and staffs of units of a higher level will be created at the proper moment, in conformity with the needs and the rates of the development of the war. As to the exact moment when they will be created, this, I think, you're not asking to know, and I have no reason to tell you. It is a matter for the Central Committee of our Party and the General Council of the National Liberation Front.»

«It seems to me you have misunderstood me!» interrupted Tempo who had been listening to me with his eyes on the ground. «I told you all this in relation to the idea I have in my head. This is what's on my mind...»

«To tell the truth,» I replied, «such an idea has never crossed our minds, so I cannot take any stand about it, either on behalf of the CC of the Party, or even on my own behalf. Moreover, as you said, you yourself have not elaborated it, hence it is just a rough idea turning over in your mind. Later, perhaps, you will concretize it better, and possibly consult with the comrades of your party and sister parties.»

«Certainly, certainly!» said Tempo.

«But no longer just in passing!» I said, half jokingly, and continued: «If this problem is put before us we shall discuss it and give our opinion. As for your concern, that perhaps you and the others might join in that 'staff' and we be left out since we still have no General Staff of the army, set your mind at rest! In any case,» I added still half jokingly, «I don't believe that participation or non-participation of our staff would spoil your idea.»

«Oh, no! It is a matter of a Balkan unity. A fraternal unity of this sort between our peoples and countries...»

«We will never hinder anything which serves the common fight against the nazi-fascist occupiers,» I told him, «but let us close this question. You yourself said that it is still too early to discuss it. We have more urgent problems to solve.»

«Agreed! We shall see each other again,» said Tempo, who stood up and shouldered his knapsack.

He seemed gloomier than when he arrived. Apparently he had thought that all he would hear from us would be «so be it». The truth is, however, that in this first meeting we behaved with him in a very comradely way, indeed more so than was necessary, were patient and kindly towards him and what he said. He went away just as suddenly as he came. It seems to me that he turned up again at our Staff a little later and again disappeared towards Macedonia and Greece, only to return one or two other times about the end of July and the beginning of August of that year. I have never been clear about how many times Tempo came and went in the period between March and August 1943. Perhaps this is because on these trips he raised only one problem, one issue — the «Balkan Staff»! During one of these appearances and disappearances, at the end of June, as far as I remember, he said to me:

«What about allowing Comrade Koçi Xoxe¹ to come to Thessaly with me? We can hold the meeting about the 'staff' with the Greek comrades and free up his legs a bit after his long stay in jail!»

We had no reason to refuse him. They went, were away

1 At the 1st National Conference of the CPA in March 1943, Koçi Xoxe, although still in prison, was elected a member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPA and charged with the task of organizational secretary of the Party. Immediately after he came out of prison, at the beginning of the summer of the same year, during the trips he made with Vukmanović-Tempo to Greece he was recruited by the latter and turned into a blind tool and obedient agent of the Belgrade leadership. He carried on his secret anti-Albanian and anti-Marxist activity consistently, until he was exposed and received the deserved punishment in the Party at the end of 1948, and in 1949 a sentence was passed on him by the organs of the people's justice.

for a week or two, and returned to Albania. Apparently it was a union of souls, because a few days later, when Tempo «was obliged» to make another of his trips to Greece about the «staff», he asked to take Koçi Xoxe with him again.

«You are recruiting Koçi to the 'Balkan cause'!» said Miladin jokingly.

«We started this job,» replied Tempo, «let us continue it.»

They returned at the end of July or the beginning of August. At that period we were at Kucaka of Korça district. This was the last meeting I had with Tempo during the years of the National Liberation War. At the same time, it was the meeting in which we had to have bitter arguments with him and hear the gravest accusations which he made about the line of our Party. This meeting marked the beginning of the open, organized interference and pressure of the CPY against us, interference and pressure which still seemed to be exerted by the delegates on their own responsibility, but which in fact, and as was proved later, were exerted on the basis of orders and guided, not by the delegates' own heads, but by the head of the Yugoslav leadership — Tito and company. However, I shall speak about this later. The fate of the idea that Tempo was «turning over in his head», the fate of the «Balkan Staff», still has to be cleared up.

After he «concretized his idea», by roving up and down all over the Balkans (the truth is that he moved a great deal, willingly and unquestioningly undertook any activity, however dangerous, seemed determined about the things he said, as stubborn as a mule, fearless, in brief, a kind of Dušan Mugoša, but with more capacity and much more capable in the performance of his mission), hence, after he «concretized» it he came to Albania all importance, together with another comrade.

«A representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece,» he introduced this comrade to us and told us a name or a pseudonym which I have never been able to remember.

We met the two new arrivals and, in order to create the «atmosphere» for Tempo, I asked jokingly:

«Well, what about the Balkans?!»

«Simmering,» said Tempo, and it was plain that he was feeling pleased with himself. «Simmering and steaming!»

«Watch out it doesn't blow up!» I replied.

Stern, arrogant and domineering as he was, Tempo rarely permitted a free conversation. With him, everything, even greetings of welcome, assumed the colour of official formulas. When he was speaking about or expounding on an idea he gave the impression that he was dictating a document. So it was this time, too.

«The idea presented some time ago about the 'Balkan Staff' has now matured,» he started his speech, «and at this meeting I think that we, the representatives of three parties, even in the absence of our Bulgarian brother, should take the first main step towards the practical concretization of the staff. We have reached agreement with the Bulgarian comrades and they will certainly take part in the next meeting. Now, as I see it, this matter...»

I saw that he was aiming very high. Moreover, now he was putting before us as an accomplished fact something to which we had not given the slightest importance. Therefore, I put in cautiously:

«Comrade Tempo, you have had a long, tiring journey. You should rest a little and then we, too, will find time to listen to your idea.»

«No», he objected immediately, «it is not a matter of listening only to me. This is an important meeting over a very cardinal problem.»

«How, then, can we meet like this, all of a sudden, on a problem which we, too, consider very important?!» I asked him. «You know the rules of organization of...»

«What rules!» he said with his notorious arrogance. «This is wartime and matters won't wait while we follow procedures!»

«I'm sorry that you present the problem in this way,» I said. «If it were a question of procedure, then I should not be present at this talk. But let us overlook that. The problem

you raise is extremely important and I cannot permit myself to sit at a meeting with the representatives of two sister parties without being clear about the purpose of the discussion, without having the opinion and guidance of my comrades, at least of the comrades of the Political Bureau on the matter. . . »

We went on for a long time opposing one another until, finally, we reached agreement that everything should be considered as a preliminary consultation and exchange of ideas, in simple comradely form, without the slightest official obligation and the things which we would discuss would not, in any way, assume the value of official attitudes. After this the comrade of the CP of Greece, who had not opened his mouth up to that time, seemed to wake up. As we heard later, he was a person who had met Tempo in the journeys he made «through the Balkans», but in regard to the problem we were dealing with, he not only had no authorization from the CC of the CPG, but his leadership did not even know that he had involved himself in this problem. Who can tell how Tempo had managed to convince him and drag him into this adventurous undertaking! Indeed, as we heard later, this so-called representative of the CC of the CPG was not even an ordinary cadre of the CP of Greece. We never learned whether Tempo had been deceived, or had brought him along to impose his idea on us «in the name of two parties». However this is not important.

Hence, we began our comradely «consultation» which wasted many valuable hours over something which was to end up as it began, an «idea turning over» in the head and in the aims of one person who roamed through the Balkans with sinister plans.

I am not going to dwell at length on the nature and character of what Tempo called the «Balkan Staff», or on what we said and how we said it in the consultation we held. But since there has been talk from time to time about this question and especially about the sinister purposes that Tito and company hid behind it, and since, from what I have heard, Tempo has recently made a dirty attempt to involve the name

of our Party and my name in this problem, I must clear up some matters:

As I said, right from the outset, we characterized the meeting which we held with Tempo and the «comrade» from the CP of Greece simply as a preliminary consultation among comrades and nothing more. Likewise, we reached agreement that the ideas expressed in this consultation should first be enriched with the ideas which the comrades of the Bulgarian Communist Party might have, and only after this should they be presented to the leaders of the four sister parties, not as conclusions or directives, but simply as ideas for each to analyse for itself in an independent way. We also agreed that the results of the analyses of each party should be made known to the four sister parties and, if all approved this idea, only then could the representatives of the four parties meet together to deal with the problem officially and take a decision.

As it turned out from the development of events, however, the «analysis» of this problem in the leadership of our Party never took place. Why?

First of all, during the presentation which Tempo made of his «idea», it was not difficult to distinguish a series of unclear points about which he was unable to reply to my questions and interjections or had been instructed to glide over. However, these were absolutely essential issues. For example, we had no objection to working, through a joint organ if need be, to assist the fighting activities which were being carried on by the partisan armies of each country, for the exchange of experience and information, for the publicizing of one another's successes, for the organization of joint actions, especially, in the border zones, for the planning of simultaneous attacks against the enemy by each country on different occasions which presented interest, etc., etc. But Tempo, who had «mulled» this idea over at great length, went far beyond this:

«No», he said, «this ought to be a staff with greater and wider competences. It should be an inter-Balkan staff which

will have the right to decide the 'major' activities of all the armies of the Balkans...»

Precisely on this point we could not be either clear or in agreement. A staff to which the partisan armies of the four countries would be subordinate! Was this correct? Moreover, was such a thing possible especially in the extremely difficult conditions of that period?! In this case what would be the functions of the general staffs of each country? How would the co-ordination of actions be carried out? Who would lead this «superstaff»? If each staff of the separate countries was led by the Central Committee of the party of the respective country, which party would lead the «Balkan Staff»? Would that mean creating a «staff of parties», too? Or would we have to go along with Tempo's idea that «the party is the party, the staff is the staff» and, consequently, deny and reject the leading role of the Party over the staffs and commands?!

I cannot say that at those early moments we understood that behind the idea of this «staff» lurked the megalomaniacal hegemonic ambitions of the leadership of the CPY to rule the Balkans. This we were to realize later. But right at those moments, apart from the grave doubts which arose in our minds about the character of the «staff», a number of Tempo's expressions also left a bad impression with us. He boasted about «the marvellous experience» of the General Staff of the Yugoslav NLA, about «its proven ability» to undertake and carry out large-scale battles successfully, the «readiness» of this staff «to make the necessary contribution to the realization of the new idea», etc., etc. He went so far as to call the experience of the Yugoslav NLA «unrivalled», «a model of mountain warfare», «the only successful form of the war in the conditions of the Balkans», etc., etc. All these things gave rise to our suspicions that behind the idea of the «joint staff» he saw the possibilities of making this «staff» subordinate to the Yugoslav staff, and hence, putting the armies of the Balkan countries under the dependence of Yugoslavia.

However, we could not extend this suspicion any further

than Tempo personally. At that period it could not even cross our minds that it was the leadership of a whole party which had chauvinist and hegemonic tendencies. What's more, Tempo declared and insisted that the idea was «his alone».

Precisely these doubts which arose in our minds were the main reason that we never gave the question of the Balkan staff serious consideration. Meanwhile we waited to see what stand the other sister parties would take on it and what the «opinion» of the CC of the CPY itself would be. However, in the autumn of 1943 Tempo disappeared and his abortive plan along with him. The idea of the «Balkan Staff» was never mentioned again and much later we were to learn that the other parties, too, had quite rightly rejected it.

So, that is how this history began and ended in the summer of 1943, and as I said, after it had been completely forgotten, all that remained of it in my mind was the arrogant figure of the man of the abortive «staff» — Tempo. When he spoke and dictated in cut-and-dried phrases about what «havoc» his «dream staff» would wreak in the Balkans, it seemed as if the god of war himself had come down and arrived as our guest at Kucaka, except that the «god» we had in front of us did not launch thunderbolts and flame from his mouth and knapsack, but only orders and directives.

The custom of keeping notes, as accurate as possible, about the problems that were worrying me, about different events, about talks and consultations I held, I have had since my youth, but I developed it further, especially during the years of the war, even though the conditions were difficult. In this meeting, too, I remember that I jotted down, there and then, the main ideas which were expressed, having in mind that we might need them if we ever had to analyse the problem in the leadership of the Party. However, when Tempo was making ready to set out again «through the Balkans», he approached me and said:

«Comrade Enver, I saw that during the talks you kept full notes. Unfortunately, I did not do this, because mostly I was speaking. Now I have to talk with the Bulgarian and

other comrades. Would you mind giving me your notes to use in the meetings which I am to hold?»

«I don't mind at all,» I said. «But, first, they are written in Albanian, and second, they are more a summary of the ideas which were expressed here rather than complete minutes.»

«So much the better, because they won't tire the translators,» he said, and I noticed that his face was beaming.

Later I thought that these notes of mine would have been forgotten like the idea of Tito and Tempo itself. But I was wrong. Tempo kept them in the archives, in order to bring them out one day to add to the Yugoslav book of a thousand and one slanders a new slander: Enver Hoxha allegedly agreed with Tempo's idea! «See, here is a document in his handwriting»!

However, from the Serbo-Jesuit Tempo nothing but accusations, slanders and a series of similar immoral actions could be expected. As I said earlier, from the first moment we met him, the impression we formed of this person was not good, and four or five months later, at the end of July and the beginning of August 1943, we were to quarrel very fiercely with him. He came back to Kucaka again, just as haughty and arrogant as before, but this time, he no longer threw the question of the «Balkan Staff» on the table. He came, all fury and indignation, on another mission — to launch a heavy attack on the line pursued by our Party. He was together with Koçi Xoxe in whom, on the two trips which they had made to Greece at that time, he had found a soul-mate and they had become fast friends.¹

1 S. V. — Tempo, in pp. 356-357 of his book «Revolucija koja Teče» (The On-going Revolution) Memoari, Beograd 1971, writes: «After the meeting of the CC of the CP of Macedonia, I set out for Greece again. As on the previous occasion Koçi Xoxe came with me. This means that the two of us became 'experts' on Greece. After all, friendship had developed between us. Although he did not speak much in the meetings with the Greek representatives, I noticed that Xoxe supported me, not only because of the fact that I was a member of the CC of the CPY, in which he had great faith, but also because of the fact that we shared the same views.»

His «introduction» was already a formula which we knew by heart:

«On my way back from Greece and since my route ran this way, I came to see you once more before I go to Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria. Comrade Xoxe urged me to come, too. 'Come on,' he said, 'otherwise the comrades will be put out'.»

«Comrade Tempo routed the Greek leadership,» put in Koçi Xoxe there and then. «What a debate, what a stern criticism! He really straightened them up! I invited him so he could tell you about it at length.»

«Why did you hold up the comrade on his long journey?» Miladin asked Koçi Xoxe. «You could have informed us about it if you considered it necessary.»

«Oh, I can never put things the way Comrade Tempo does,» protested Koçi innocently, «he did all the talking.»

Meanwhile, as if he did not notice what Miladin was hinting at, Tempo licked his lips, placed his briefcase on his knees and embarked on one of his usual outbursts. After pouring out a series of criticisms about the line of the CP of Greece (unfortunately he had grounds for criticism, because the major mistakes of principle of the CP of Greece were evident and recognized also by us at that period), the rest of his spleen he vented on us:

«Why do I tell you these things?!» he asked at one moment like a pedantic teacher, giving us a «superior» look. «I tell you,» he continued, «because I have criticisms of you and your line, too. Your stand towards the Balli Kombëtar is incorrect, it is wrong.»

«How, in what direction?» I asked him.

«To put it bluntly,» he said putting on a very stern mien, «it has been and is an impermissible opportunist stand.»

«The criticism you make is extremely grave, it is an accusation,» I replied to Tempo angrily. «What is the basis for what you say?»

«Your softness and tolerance towards the Balli Kombëtar from the first moments it appeared on the scene,» said Tempo,

in his usual style. «It took you by surprise and subsequently you have not known what stand to take. Instead of declaring war on it, you offered the negotiating table.»

Miladin Popović began to fiddle irritably with his moustache with movements in which it could be seen that his indifference towards the new arrival was outdone by his displeasure at his words. Nako Spiru, with his eyes on the floor and his hands never still, was crumbling a chip of wood. Sejfulla adopted the stance of the authoritative «professor», while Koçi Koxe stood in front of «the Balkan authority» like a pupil in an examination.

«Comrade Tempo,» I said, «we have respect for the CPY and for you as a cadre of that party, but you must understand that we can never agree with what you have just said. Nevertheless, we don't blame you greatly for this, because you have not had the opportunity or possibility to acquaint yourself better with the development of events in our country. You alleged that we were taken by surprise by the emergence of the Balli Kombëtar on the scene! I don't know where you got this idea and perhaps this is not the place to discuss it, but so that you can go on your way with an easy mind, there are a few things I want to tell you: Not just at the end of 1942 when the first signs of the emergence of the Balli Kombëtar appeared, but even before the founding of our Party, and, especially, since November 1941, we have made extensive analyses and all-round efforts to win not only the masses of the people, but also other patriotic nationalist elements, no matter how vacillating, unclear, and so on, to the line of the Party. Many of these people understood us and have joined us in the war, others hesitated and others again, despite all our efforts, opposed us and tried to hinder us. We continued our work with this last category, but fascism and open reaction also worked with them in the opposite direction. It became clear that they were not going to come over to us and it also became clear that they were going to organize themselves, or fascism would organize them, to build them up as a counter to our line, to the National

Liberation Front and the National Liberation War. How then, were we 'taken by surprise'?! Just how they were going to organize themselves concretely and what name they would give their grouping is another matter, this we could not guess, but I don't believe that you would call this 'taking us by surprise'.

«Let us leave this aspect,» interrupted Tempo, «and look into the matter a little more deeply. Are not your soft attitude towards the Balli Kombëtar and your efforts to reach an agreement with it opportunism?»

«No,» I replied immediately, «they cannot be called opportunism. The fact is that we have never at any moment reached a compromise with the Balli Kombëtar and there has been no opportunist and conciliatory action with it on our part. On the contrary, right from the outset we have been clear why this organization was created, have expressed this in the Party and among the people and have had no illusions. But you should bear in mind the platform of our Conference of Peza. I don't know whether you have been informed about it,» I asked him.

«I've heard about it,» he said coldly.

«At Peza,» I said, «in September 1942 our Party organized a conference at which the political and organizational foundations of the National Liberation Front were laid, the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council was created and very important decisions were defined and adopted. To make things more clear to you,» I stressed, «at Peza in September 1942 we did those same things which your party was to do at Bihać about two months later, at the end of November 1942!»

Tempo snorted indignantly. The comparison which I used, not without purpose, did not please him one bit. But he said nothing, because there was nothing he could say.

«At this Conference,» I continued, «we correctly put forward the platform of the political and organizational unity of the whole people in a single Front, laying down one fundamental condition for this unity: war against the occupier. Irrespective of its true aims, the Balli Kombëtar, which was

created later as reaction against the National Liberation Front, for purposes of demagogy and deception, came out with slogans of the 'war', 'independence', 'ethnic Albania', etc. Naturally, some people were deceived by these slogans. The heads of the Balli Kombëtar also formed a few 'çetas' and are trying to form others. Of course, they have not carried out any action against the Italians and will not do so, but their demagogy has not failed to have some effect. This being so, if we had risen against them with the rifle right from the start, this would have had grave and unpleasant consequences. I'm not talking about the possibility of losing ten or twenty of the heads of the Balli Kombëtar. As far as we are concerned, they were gone from the beginning, they have never been and never will be with us. But our concern is with that part of the population that is deceived, as well as with a number of elements of the middle strata who associated themselves with the slogans of the Balli Kombëtar and whom we must win over at all costs. Had we taken the axe to the Balli Kombëtar from the start, we would have created erroneous views among these people and antagonized them. How then can you call this stand wrong?»

«But how can you accept this course of events?» put in Tempo. «You want to merge the two sides? This I don't understand. I cannot call this anything but what I called it at the start, opportunism.»

«What 'merging' are you talking about?!» I retorted. «Such a thing has not occurred and never will occur. Although we have tried to convince the various nationalist forces and groups to hurl themselves into the fight, this does not mean that the Party wants to merge, not even with the Front, let alone with them. It is the Party that leads the Front and, whether or not the Balli Kombëtar enters the ranks of the Front, our Party will never agree to share its leading role with anyone.»

«Maybe, maybe,» said Tempo, «but I stick by what I said: you should have opposed the Balli Kombëtar with all means right from the beginning. You have treated it very gently.»

Tempers were rising but I kept my aplomb.

«Not at all,» I told him, «if we were to do as you advise we would fall into the trap of the Balli Kombëtar and those who created it. Hence, we would land ourselves into the lap of the policy of fascism which has done everything in its power to hinder the war by trying to divide the people, to stir up animosities amongst the ranks of the peasantry, the intelligentsia, the youth, and so on. It wants to involve us in a fratricidal war. We had to avert this and we have done so. Our tactic has been this: All right, we take into consideration the existence of your organization, but what is the platform which you follow? The war?! If you say yes, then come along and let us fight on a single front, in the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, which is the organization that includes the whole fighting people, all the currents and organizations which are for immediate uncompromising war against the occupiers. The touchstone is the war, the war against the occupiers, an immediate, uninterrupted, organized war, this, Comrade Tempo,» I continued, «has been and still is our weapon to expose the Balli Kombëtar and to defeat the policy of its leaders. This is and will remain the touchstone for everybody. And this line has had and still has great effect. The chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar are left isolated. The people, who cannot endure fascism, are understanding us more and more and they will continue to do so. When those who have been deceived see that the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar are keeping them inactive, that the only war they are waging is against chickens, they abandon these chiefs and unite with us. This, then, is our line and I don't believe it is a bad line and wrong.»

«Perhaps you don't!» said Tempo in a tight corner. «But I still stick to what I said. On this course you will either merge with the Balli Kombëtar or you will remain a mere handful of people and the Balli Kombëtar will face you with the alternative: either join us or we fight you.»

«As for the possibility of our remaining a mere handful of people, you need have no doubts in that direction and I find it regrettable that the idea even occurred to you. As for the

Balli Kombëtar threatening us with the rifle, you should know that we have our artillery ready.»

«Then, let us leave it to time to prove!» said Tempo like an oracle of woe.

«Certainly,» I replied, «and you may be sure that time will prove the correctness of what we have done.»

«Or of what I say!» added Tempo, looking mean, and he slapped his stick against his boots.

«Well,» I said, «but I believe that in your heart you, as a communist, don't want what you said to be proved right. Is that not so?»

«Of course, of course!» he muttered.

Our talk was almost at an end. Both sides had become heated and our mutual annoyance was quite plain. However, I could not allow him to get away with this.

«There is something else which has made an impression on me,» I said quietly. «During these last four or five months we have met 'by chance' a number of times. At first you made a criticism of us for a 'sectarian line' towards precisely those elements towards whom you are now accusing us of 'opportunism'. We have told you that neither the one nor the other criticism seems in order to us. However, since we are talking about two opposite accusations over the same thing, I believe that now you must withdraw one of them. Which do you think you will withdraw: the criticism over 'sectarianism' or that over 'opportunism'?!»

«You are being sarcastic!» he exclaimed. «And this is impermissible in the relations between comrades. But I reply to you without sarcasm: I stick to them both!»

«I was not being sarcastic at all!» I replied. «I am speaking of two opposite assessments of the same line, of the same problem and from the same person. This won't do at all.»

«From the dialectical viewpoint I think that the Yugoslav comrade is right,» put in the «professor» Sejfulla Malëshova in a querulous voice. It was not more than two months since he had returned from emigration and we had welcomed him warmly and co-opted him as a candidate member of the Cen-

tral Committee of the Party. I shall have something to say later about his past and his «deeds», therefore, here I shall dwell only on this instance.

«Something which is sectarian at one moment», continued the «professor», «can turn into something opportunist later and vice-versa. I am speaking in the theoretical sense, because, of course, I still have not gone into matters in practice...»

Sejfulla Malëshova was soon to go into matters «in practice», too, but this would come to light later. The thing that worried me at this period was the question to which I still was unable to give an accurate answer: Why this incorrect and megalomaniacal stand by these «emissaries» of the CPY? Why these «criticisms» and accusations which suddenly and arbitrarily turned into one another?! Such questions were to worry me even more just a very little while later when, after the Balli Kombëtar had filled the cup and thrown itself openly into the arms of fascism, we began the open fight against it. This same Tempo and, later, his comrades who in July and August 1943 accused us of being «opportunists», in September and October of the same year were to accuse us of being «sectarians»! How then were we to explain such diametrically opposite stands?!

More and more I was beginning to suspect that the emissaries of the CPY were coming to us with the mania «to find» mistakes at all costs, to find them even where there were none, or if this were impossible, to fabricate them. Let everything be turned upside down, let white be called black, just so long as we were «caught out» in a mistake and a great fuss was made about it! But why are they acting like this? I asked myself. Don't they understand the truth? Don't they know our real situation? Can those who inform them be telling them things the wrong way round? Or can it be that since they come from afar they want to appear as if they come from «on high», from the «centre», from the «Olympus» of Marxism-Leninism?!

I thought that all these things had their influence, but in particular, their mania to take the limelight, to show

off, to present themselves as people of great knowledge, was the main reason that impelled Tito's men to make absurd accusations against us, one after the other, without any basis. On these occasions, obviously, we stuck to our guns and neither altered nor infringed the line which we followed simply to please the delegates sent to us! If we had acted otherwise it would have been all over for us. They took notes and filled in their reports, clung tightly to their briefcases and we knew that their reports were going to Tito's Staff. Very well, then, let them write what and how they liked. For Tito and the leadership of the CC of the CPY we had respect and could not doubt their intention. After all we knew that, in the final analysis, it was neither Tito nor anyone else abroad who would judge us for better or worse. We were responsible to our Party and our people. If we acted wrongly, we would render full account for this to them alone. The course of the struggle for victory, on which we were resolutely leading the people, would be the best and most indisputable way of clearing up everything. This is how we rationalized our doubts about why the Yugoslav emissaries talked rubbish about us and, obviously, we continued on our course, convinced that there was no truth in their accusations, either about «opportunism» or about «sectarianism».

Time proved completely that there was only one thing wrong with this judgment of ours: at first we considered that the blame lay on the emissaries only, but not on those who sent them — Tito and company. Time also confirmed that we were completely right when we said that they made their accusations for sinister, non-communist motives, although these motives were much more seriously hostile than we thought at first.

However, if we were revolted with them at first, because we were convinced that they were bullying us for nothing, later we were to learn shocking things. Later we were to learn that precisely at the time when we were talking with the wavering patriots and nationalists, trying to win them over to the course of the war (and for this we were «opportunists» (sic!)),

«these stern fighters against opportunism» — Tito and company, had not only entered into negotiations and conclude agreements with the representatives of the Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, but they were talking... even with the German nazis, with the greatest criminals of all mankind, in order to reach accord and agreement with them!

In Albania it was a miserable Ali Këlcyra who made contact with the fascist General Dalmazzo and reached with him a «ceasefire agreement»¹ and an agreement to fight against us, and as soon as we learned of this filthy act, we rang the alarm bells and exposed this dishonest bey for his collaboration with the chiefs of fascism!

How that act of Tito and company came about it is not up to me to explain. That is the business of the Yugoslavs themselves and, as is known, in the internal struggle which has never ceased there, the moment comes and they themselves bring out one another's dirty linen. This is what happened recently with a series of documents which confirm the statements published long ago about Tito's negotiations with the German occupiers.²

At the time when we had good relations with the CPY, we listened with respect when they spoke about the fierce and bloody battles of May and June 1943 fought in the Sutjeska Valley. We had heard about the extraordinary heroism which the Yugoslav partisan brigades had displayed there, had heard about the unrivalled acts of the resistance and

1 In March 1943, authorized by the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar, Ali Këlcyra, one of its chiefs, signed with the supreme commander of the Italian fascist occupation troops R. Dalmazzo a secret protocol on collaboration against the national liberation forces.

2 The particular reference is to the book by Tito's official biographer Vladimir Dedijer, «Novi Prilozi za Biografiju J. B. Tita» (New Contributions to the Biography of Tito) (2) Rijeka 1981. A whole chapter of this book, through authentic documents, gives an accurate picture of the agreement which was signed in March 1943 between delegates of the Staff of the YNLA on the personal orders of Tito and representatives of the High Command of the nazi army in Yugoslavia.

bravery of Serbian, Montenegrin, Croat, Slovenian and other partisans, commanders and commissars. It was said that Tito had commanded the forces in person and, indeed, had been wounded during those days.

Later, however, we learned that all that blood which was shed at Sutjeska, the thousands of brave partisans who gave their lives in that battle did so as a result of an act of treachery of Tito personally. His personal delegates, the ill-famed Milovan Djilas, Koča Popović and Vladimir Velebit, three of the main cadres of the Yugoslav General Staff, each carrying a white flag, according to the conditions of the German Command, went to talks with the heads of the German army, signed an agreement with them on a «ceasefire» and returned to Tito carrying the pledge of nazism. The «strategist» Tito thought that the time had come to settle accounts with his internal opponents, with the četnici and ustaše, and directed the cadres of the staff that they should not fear an eventual nazi attack. Vigilance declined and the ustaše were considered the main enemy. While Tito's staff was living with the euphoria of victory and the partisan brigades were training for a parade (Tito was anticipating the parade for his assumption of the throne), the nazi staff secretly assembled its own divisions and completely encircled the main troops of the Yugoslav NLA in a narrow valley. So great was the euphoria Tito had aroused in the staffs that even when reports came that the Germans were increasing their concentrations, Tito's men jeered at this information and at those who brought it.

Right at these moments the tragedy erupted. The fresh German troops with air and artillery support wrought havoc. Six thousand valiant Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croat and Slovenian men and women paid for Tito's treachery with their life's blood. The author of this terrible history, Tito, as he related himself, was saved by a hair's breadth... by a dog, by his personal dog which protected the body of the commander-in-chief and was cut to ribbons!

Tito remained alive also to continue the great plot which he concocted to the detriment of our Party and people.

But, as I said, at that time we did not know and could not imagine that a leader, such as we imagined Tito to be, could do such a thing. For the things which we did know and which did not seem right to us, we laid the blame on the Yugoslav emissaries, such as Blažo Jovanović at first, Tempo in the spring and summer of 1943 and in a series of other cases. But let us continue with Tempo.

After the fierce quarrel on political issues which we had at Kucaka, we had, what you might call, a ludicrous incident with Tempo's wife Milica, who at that time travelled around with him as his secretary. Before he left, «the Balkan brain» wanted to take the only radio transmitter we had. Naturally, we could not give it to him. However, when Tempo was persisting in his request in a reasonably comradely way, Milica intervened and, in a somewhat authoritarian tone, tried to convince us that we had no need for it, while it was very important for Tempo. I lost my temper and I said in an ill-mannered way:

«You keep out of this. It's nothing to do with you, you are behaving like Geraldina...»¹

She was offended and began to cry. I begged her pardon. Tempo tried to soothe her and told her: «Enver said it only as a joke.» So this incident came to a close.

Tempo left Kucaka totally dissatisfied. Neither the approving interjections of his «friend» Koçi Koxe, nor the approving responses «in the theoretical sense» of Sejfulla Malëshova could calm him. These two were the only ones among our comrades who, to this or that degree, displayed support for Tempo's accusations. We shall see later what this would lead to.

After this conflict, up till the liberation of Albania, I never again set eyes on Svetozar Vukmanović. Each of us had the worst possible opinion of the other. The fact is that he did not come, or was not allowed to come, either «by chance» or «officially», to our Staff. However, Tempo was

¹ Wife of the ex-king of Albania, Ahmet Zog.

not to give up «the Albanian issue» in the context of the «Balkan mission» which he had undertaken. After this, since it was impossible to do battle with us directly, he carried on his anti-Albanian work «from a distance» and indirectly: with letters full of slanders and accusations, while roving around our border zones, quarrelling with our cadres and partisans in these zones. Endless problems, difficulties and obstacles he was to create for us, traps and plots he was to lay and to concoct against us, but in the struggle to defeat them we were to become better acquainted with the truth about «Tempo's mission» and about those who had charged him with this mission.

Ominous signs over an old problem

Regardless of the first frictions and bad impressions which we formed about the two emissaries of the Yugoslav leadership in the first part of 1943 up to August of that year, this in no way brought about a cooling of our former feelings and friendly stand towards the CPY and its leadership. We always believed that we had no reason to confuse the leadership of the party, and even less, the party itself, with one or two of its cadres who suffered from the complexes of megalomania and arrogance, despotism and the mania to dictate.

Precisely because we judged matters in this way, in each step we took we tried to rise above the frictions and discontent which were created. We considered our actions very carefully and, with complete communist sincerity, struggled to strengthen our fraternal friendship and solidarity with the just struggle of the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. In our propaganda, in the meetings and other activities we conducted in the Party or among the masses, we spoke openly about our friendship with the peoples of the Soviet Union, with other fraternal peoples, and in this

context with the peoples of Yugoslavia, too. We used all our possibilities to propagate the successes of their war, considering them as our own successes.

This was a very good thing that we did, but it should not be thought that everything in this direction was done easily and without difficulties. The fascist propaganda and that of the traitor governments of the Mustafa Merlikas and company issued an unrestrained torrent of anti-Slav filth, highlighted and publicized the old feuds and squabbles in the relations between our peoples, and shed crocodile tears over the blood and sufferings inflicted on the inhabitants of the Albanian regions of the north in the past by the Great-Serbs' genocide. All this could not fail to have some effect. The manoeuvres of reaction with the so-called fascist «liberation» of Kosova and the unification of Kosova and some other Albanian regions with the trunk of the Motherland occupied by the nazi-fascists, gave this propaganda even greater advantages. Another circumstance very damaging to us was created in the first months after the founding of the Party: in the spring of 1942 one of the main bases of the printing equipment of the CC of the Party in Tirana fell into the hands of fascism and, together with our names, the names of Miladin Popović and Dušan Mugoša were discovered by the SIM.¹

The venal publications of fascism and its collaborationists began to vomit poison against us, describing us as «sold out» to Moscow and to the Serbs. In those publications Miladin and Dušan «were promoted» to no more or less than the «chiefs» of our Communist Party (!) and we were accused of waging the war in order «to attach» Albania to Serbia! (Later the Balli Kombëtar was pumped full of this filthy propaganda and later still..., dreadful to imagine..., just like the Italian fascists, like Pariani, and the Albanian fascists, like Merlika and Ali Këlcyra, Tito and his henchmen, too, were to employ

¹ Servizio Informazioni Militari (Military Intelligence Service of fascist Italy).

the same terms, the same denigrating names, against our Party in connection with the role of Miladin and Dušan!)

I mentioned all those things to show that it was not an easy job, but, on the contrary, a very difficult and courageous work which our Party undertook in the beginning to create and strengthen internationalist friendship with the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. We set about this work, taking all this into account, and we never hesitated for fear that the people might not understand us, that the masses might be alienated from us, and we might lose our influence and leading role in the Front and in the war. The people understand you if you know how to tell them the truth and, above all, if you remain loyal to that truth to the end. The fact is that the wise advice of our Party found support among the Albanian people. During the war years, from our side, strong foundations were laid for closer and more fraternal relations between our peoples and parties in the future.

At this period, the problem of those Albanian territories which had been violently annexed to Yugoslavia before and after the First World War, and which in 1941, for its own purposes, nazi-fascism had reunited with the body of the Motherland, presented a much more delicate and complicated matter.

We, as Albanians and as communists, with full consciousness, had always called what occurred in 1913 in regard with the partitioning of our Homeland a great historical injustice. Likewise, as communists and as Albanians, with full right we did not consider what the nazi-fascists did in 1941 in connection with the Albanian national question a true solution, but considered it a trick and a great fraud.

Kosova and the other Albanian territories were united with the body of the Homeland, not to put right an injustice of the past, but for a series of ulterior motives. Through this «unification», first of all, the old ambitions and desires of fascist Italy to enslave the widest possible territories in the Balkans were satisfied. Second, by presenting themselves as «liberators», through this «unification», the hierarchs of fascism

aimed to keep the Albanian population, especially that of the north, out of the National Liberation War. A special aim of this «solution» was to neutralize and win over to the side of fascism that section of nationalists and other patriotic elements who, in the cafés of Europe and the drinking dens of the time of Zog, swore black and blue that they were burning with fury and could hardly wait to see the Homeland united! Now fascism said to them, «There you are, bend the knee to and serve fascism which has dropped your 'unification' into your lap like a ripe apple...!» Hence, this «unification» in the fascist way was placed at the disposal of various Albanian quisling governments, which were open tools of fascism, and all the rest of Albanian reaction to wear as a cloak of «patriotism» over their shoulders in the propaganda which they had to put out to deceive the people and, especially, against our Communist Party, which appealed to all, young and old, to rise in the general fight for freedom.

At the same time, through this «unification» by military force, fascism and nazism left all the paths open for the old squabbles and feuds between the neighbouring peoples of the Balkans to continue at all times. This came about not only because of the fact that this «unification» was piecemeal, arbitrary and with plenty of hotbeds deliberately left for future quarrels and clashes, but also because of the other fact that this «unification» under the auspices of fascism had no basis or guarantee for the future whatsoever. It could very easily be altered in any way that interested the fascist occupiers and according to the situations that presented themselves. Under fascist occupation, the borders between states and countries had absolutely no value or meaning — all were under terror, the bloodbath of the Hitlerite and Mussolini empires threatened all.

Many other factors and causes could be listed to explain what was that «unification» which the nazi-fascists carried out in Albania in 1941 and this, in the context of the history of that time, remains one of the tasks of our historians. I mentioned a few of them merely to emphasize why we Al-

banian communists never fell for the unrestrained propaganda which was put out at that period about this painful problem of our history.

In the Party and among the people we said openly that our national question as a whole, hence that of Kosova and the other Albanian territories attached to old Yugoslavia, too, could never be solved by nazi-fascism. It could never be expected that those hordes, which had invaded and were burning and devastating the whole of Albania, would «liberate» and «recognize» a part of it.

Don't be deceived by the demagogic manoeuvres of the members of traitor governments and the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar, either, who scream and shout about «greater Albania» and about «ethnic Albania», we told the people. Those who at all times have been ready to put the whole of Albania up for auction to the highest bidder, can never be defenders of the Albanian cause. Their «patriotism» is a fraud. Those who are going to solve the problems of our country and our nation are not and can never be the servants of fascists.

We issued calls to the people: «Only unrelenting war against the fascists and their collaborators will lead to the solution of our national problem, an integral part of which is the putting right of historical injustices. For this,» we told them, «our Communist Party is fighting and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, likewise, is leading the peoples of its own country on this same course.»

The people understood us and without hesitation threw themselves into the decisive struggle with confidence in the course on which we were leading them.

In regard to the population of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia, however, the problem presented greater difficulties. Suddenly the people there found themselves faced with the «solution» of their most cardinal problem: the Serbian yoke was thrown off, they were united with the trunk from which they had been cut, an administration staffed by Albanians was set up, people came and went from Tirana to Prishtina and vice-versa, Albanian schools were

opened, Albanian books and newspapers were published, etc., etc. This was a kind of «liberation», except that it was «liberation» from an old yoke and falling under a new yoke — that of fascism.

Precisely in these conditions the problem that presented itself here was the mobilization of the Albanian population of these zones in the fight against an occupier which presented itself to this population as a «liberator». Only another, much more powerful, very advanced, reliable and hopeful alternative would make the people of Kosova rise in struggle against the «liberator» occupier immediately and with all their might.

Only our communist parties could ensure this alternative.

There were two ways open to achieve this essential thing:

First, the Communist Party of Albania, taking no account at all of the fascist «solution», should extend its activities to the people of Kosova and appeal to them openly: rise and fight under the leadership of the Communist Party of Albania against the new occupier — nazi-fascism, mobilize yourselves in the ranks of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front of Albania, form çetas, battalions and brigades under the command of the General Staff of the Albanian National Liberation Army, and thus wage the final fight, and its crowning with success will bring liberation from the yoke of the new or any other occupier.

Second, the people of Kosova would be raised in struggle under the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia, in common unity with the peoples of Yugoslavia, under the command of the General Staff of the Yugoslav NLA.

The immediate aim of both these courses was the same: to drive out the nazi-fascist occupiers through the armed struggle, and as a result, as the fruit of this struggle, our national problem would be solved justly, once and for all, in accordance with the aspirations and dreams of the people, and after this, all the other problems would be solved.

It is indisputable that the first course presented many and very great advantages for the mobilization of the people of

Kosova and other Albanian regions in the war. This, without doubt, would also have great advantages and provide much greater possibilities for the propaganda and the whole struggle of our Party in all the other parts of the Homeland. At the same time, the mobilization in the war of the Kosova masses, proven in battle as the bravest of the brave, would also be a contribution to the war of the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Balkans.

However, as is known, the second course was followed. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia demanded that the population of Kosova and the other Albanian regions of Yugoslavia should be mobilized in the fight under its leadership and immediately after the war this population would decide its own future on the basis of the Leninist principle of the right of self-determination. This demand we considered reasonable and fair.

We did not consider it in that way simply because the «CPY demanded it». The CPY could demand many things from us, as it did, but right from the start we agreed only to those demands which our Marxist logic told us were right. This is what happened in this case, too. The «argument» that «if the people of Kosova are raised under the leadership of the CPA, Serbian or Montenegrin reaction will not understand this, and it will create problems for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia,» had no influence on our stand. There was anti-communist reaction opposed to the national liberation war not only in Yugoslavia, but also in Albania, hence, difficulties would be evident for the two parties, indeed they would be greater in our country, because on the question of Kosova Albanian reaction had the card of the truth in its hands.

Hence, more profound reasons and causes impelled us to adopt the solution on which we agreed.

We knew that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was a party built in a country of many nations and peoples who, in the bitter past of the Yugoslav state, had never had any kind of unity within the Yugoslav Kingdom. On the contrary, as a result of the savagely oppressive chauvinist Great-Serb policy towards other peoples and nations within the

former Kingdom, the feelings of division, old and new jealousies and animosities, had become more profound. Likewise, the efforts of the bourgeoisie and reaction of each part to break away, to secede, or to establish its hegemony over the other parts, had been more than evident in all periods and had played their own role. The main thing was that after the nazi-fascist occupation of April 1941, the Yugoslav Kingdom had ceased to exist. Macedonia was divided between Bulgaria and Italy. Nazi Germany took Serbia, a part of Slovenia and other parts for itself. Montenegro, Kosova, Dalmatia, the Croatian Coast and the southern part of Slovenia went to Italy. The so-called independent Croat state, a creation of nazism, included, apart from Croatia, territories cut off from other countries of the former Yugoslav Kingdom, and so on. An amalgamated state, artificially stuck together, such as the Yugoslav Kingdom had been, could not have any other future apart from artificial separations, stickings together, and patchings up of all kinds.

But these were no moments for discussing whether or not the «unity» which the Yugoslav Kingdom had created, ought to be preserved. This would be and had to be a problem of the future. The cardinal problem now was to ensure the unity of all these peoples in the general and decisive war for liberation. This the Communist Party could and must do. But since the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had been built and operated on a federal basis, even though the former Yugoslavia had now been destroyed, the Party had to preserve the former structure on which it had been built and functioned. Nothing else could be done. Otherwise, it would have to be disintegrated, broken up and reorganized on the basis of the former states which comprised the former Yugoslav Kingdom, or it would have to cease to exist entirely. This danger was imminent.

As is known, after April 1941, for a certain period the organization of the Party of Macedonia, part of the CPY, broke off all contacts with the CC of the CPY and linked up with the CC of the Communist Party of Bulgaria.

In plain language, this meant that in that part of the

former Yugoslavia the CPY ceased to exist. If we were to do the same thing with the organizations of the Party, however small, of Kosova and other Albanian territories, then the CPY would cease to exist also in Kosova and the other regions of the former Yugoslav Kingdom, which were attached to Albania. Carrying this further, the same thing could occur, if the CP of Italy might demand it, in regard to those parts that were united with Italy, the CP of Hungary in regard to those parts which were united with Hungary, and so on. Thus, it follows that a good part of the CPY would be disintegrated and enter into the composition of those communist parties which operated in the countries with which bits of the former Yugoslav Kingdom were united. The remainder would either be lost or be reorganized in separate communist parties in Serbia and Croatia. At those moments, these would have been risky manoeuvres without any positive results. Moreover, not only could such reorganizations never be carried out, but the times, the conditions and the possibilities did not even permit discussion of them. Hence, in favour of the immediate cardinal problem of the moment — the organization of the general war against the nazi-fascist occupiers, the former status of the CPY had to be accepted and it had to be assisted to preserve this status. Otherwise, it would not be just the CPY which would suffer. Above all, the struggle of the peoples of Yugoslavia would suffer. The people would remain without a leadership or, in the absence of the leadership of the communist party, reaction, Draža Mihailović and company, the Anglo-American allies, etc., would mobilize them in the fight.

This is precisely how the Executive Committee of the Comintern must have judged the matter when it decided that the organization of the Party of Macedonia should break off the links created after April 1941 with the CP of Bulgaria and enter into relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, of which it had long been a part. We, too, had proceeded from such a judgment right from the outset in regard to the stand we took as to who should organize and directly lead the struggle of the people of Kosova and the other Al-

banian regions annexed in the past to Yugoslavia. But, I stress, even though we accepted to make this concession to the CPY for the period of the war, we never permitted the slightest infringement of the Leninist-Stalinist principles on the national question, and in particular, the basic principle of the right of self-determination up to secession. This principle, which the CPY declared would be applied in accordance with the free will of all the nations and nationalities of the former Yugoslav Kingdom, would apply even more to the people of Kosova and the other Albanian regions once annexed to it. This because the question of these regions and the Albanian population which lived in them was quite different from the question of Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro, etc. Whereas for each of the latter, the question involved peoples and countries of the same nation which constituted a separate entity inside or outside the former Yugoslavia, for Kosova and the other Albanian regions the problem was radically different. They were part of a people and a nation that had been attached, not only artificially but, more importantly, quite arbitrarily to Yugoslavia. Albania was their trunk, they were part of this trunk. Under Yugoslavia they did not constitute a separate nation, a separate unity, as was the case of some others. Precisely for this reason, even if the population of these Albanian regions had risen in struggle at those moments under the leadership of the Communist Party which operated in the motherland, neither the CPY, nor the unity of the other peoples of the former Yugoslav Kingdom in the war would have suffered any serious harm. But, as I said, we agreed to make a concession to the CPY, with the aim of avoiding any cause of unnecessary arguments and discussions which would have been harmful at those moments. We made this concession, so that this question could not be used even as a «pretext» by others, whether elements with nationalist tendencies within the CPY (there were plenty of them), or elements from the communist parties of neighbouring countries. This was not the time to explain to them where the peculiarity of Kosova and the other Albanian regions

lay, it was not the time for such debates and discussions. If they were necessary, they could be left for later. The main thing now was to arouse the peoples in the general war against the fascist occupation. Later, when the conditions and possibilities had been created, when our communist parties were in power, then yes — everything would be decided justly and would be settled finally, according to the will of the peoples themselves.

That is how we judged and that is how we acted. I believe that we judged and acted correctly, like mature communists, broad-minded in the treatment of delicate problems, like communists who saw the cause of their own party and country in the context of the general cause, who even at the most difficult moments were able to regard the advancement of the struggle in their own country as closely linked with the great interest of the advancement of the struggle for national and social liberation in the other countries.

Undoubtedly, when we decided to adopt this stand, we took into account all the difficulties and the many problems which would be created for us, especially by reaction. But it should not be thought that even within our Party everything was understood and approved immediately and by everyone. There were comrades who could not easily understand why the people of Kosova should not be mobilized in the war under our leadership at this moment, and there were others, especially discontented elements with a load of old prejudices inherited from the days of groups and megalomania, who exerted pressure on us and intervened openly to change our stand.

In the book «When the Party Was Born» I have written how Koço Tashko threatened us with a letter he wanted to send to the Comintern, in which he raised a series of problems in opposition to the line which the Party followed.¹ One of these problems was that of our stand towards Kosova and other Albanian-inhabited regions in Yugoslavia.

«What is this?!» said Koço. «Is Kosova to be dependent

¹ Enver Hoxha, «When the Party Was Born» (Memoirs) Tirana 1982, pp. 367-369, 2nd Alb. ed.

on the CC of the CPY?! That is Albanian territory inhabited by Albanians, and now that the Albanians have their own Communist Party, there is no reason why they should be divided, some under the leadership of our Party and some under that of the Yugoslav party.»

«The main thing is that the people, both here and there, should be aroused to fight, the main thing is that our two parties are communist parties and are fighting for a great common cause,» I told him. «As for the people of Kosova being mobilized under the leadership of the CPY, this has to do only for the period of the war and is done in the interests of the war.»

«I don't understand it, I protest,» objected Tashko. «In the letter of which I have told you, I shall write to the Comintern about this problem, too!» he threatened in the end.

«Go ahead,» I told him, «write about this, too!»

He did write but, as I have related elsewhere, later he repented his action and withdrew the letter and, moreover, at the 1st National Conference he made a self-criticism of the views he had expressed in it.

We continued on our course with the communist confidence that the crowning of the war of our peoples with success and the existence of our communist parties would be the greatest guarantee that, immediately after the war, the problem of Kosova and the other Albanian territories «attached» to the former Yugoslavia would be settled finally, once and for all.

On many occasions the CC of the CPY itself had declared that it would remain loyal to the Leninist-Stalinist theory on the national question: the right of nations to self-determination up to secession.

These things were proclaimed and declared about whole nations which comprised separate states in that former kingdom, and as such these statements had even greater value for the just solution of the problem of that part of Albania which had been artificially and unjustly attached to Yugoslavia. Since every nation, as a whole, would be permitted to freely choose its own future, the part of a nation violently

attached to an alien body would be even more entitled to this. When I speak in this way, I have in mind the question not of ten or even a hundred villages of a national minority, but the question of territories to the extent of half the entire territories of the Homeland, the question not of 500 or 5 000 inhabitants of a national minority, but the question of a population which was no less in number than the remainder of the Albanian population.

Thus, we believed that the Yugoslav communists understood these things in this same way and we took into account all the difficulties and obstacles which would arise for us. Hence, let Kosova be transformed from an old bone of contention into a territory for the affirmation of the friendship between peoples and their fraternization in the war, a territory to prove that the communist parties are able to provide wise solutions for all the problems left over from history. We passed our test successfully. It was the turn of the Yugoslav comrades to prove in practice their dedication and loyalty to the declarations of principle which they made.

Meanwhile, we stepped up even further our work and aid in the direction of developing the war in Kosova and the other Albanian territories. It is known that since 1940 and, especially 1941, no small number of communists of Kosova origin had been sent from our communist groups to work and fight there. They sent us two people, we sent them forty-two. We had no pretensions that these people should maintain their connections with us. After Kosova and some other regions were attached to the trunk of the Homeland, hundreds of officials, teachers, etc., were sent to these zones by the Albanian collaborationist governments to set up the Albanian administration there, to open schools in the Albanian language, etc. Taking advantage of this legal opportunity, we made every effort to and did send amongst these people the maximum number of sympathizers and patriotic elements, instructing them to make every effort to make the issues clear to the population of Kosova and to assist them to rise in the fight for freedom.

During 1942 we stepped up our aid and efforts to give an impulse to the awakening of the Albanian population of these regions and to arouse them to fight. In view of the great difficulties which existed, although our Party was young and with a relatively small number of members, still we decided to send a number of other comrades of our Party who originated from Kosova, Dibra, etc., to these zones. Both through them and through propaganda material, we appealed to the population of these zones to rid themselves of any illusion about the alleged liberation which fascism brought them and to mobilize themselves in the fight, shoulder to shoulder with the other peoples of Yugoslavia, under the leadership of the CPY, in order to throw off the yoke of fascism, which was the main enemy that we had in our homes.

Similar calls to and efforts with the people of Kosova and the other regions had been made by the CPY which had sought and had been set the task of mobilizing and leading the people of these zones in the war.

The fact is, however, that the results expected were not forthcoming. Without doubt, all the manoeuvres of nazi-fascism with its so-called liberation of these zones, internal reaction, and the backwardness which these zones had inherited from the past, exerted their influence to bring about this «hesitation». We had taken account of all these things. But there were others which must not be overlooked: a profound influence on the failure of this population to activate itself properly in the war was exerted by the unjust, imprecise and unclear line pursued towards this population by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia itself.

That party issued many statements about its stand on the national question, but in none of them did it make a clear-cut pronouncement on the future of Kosova and the other Albanian regions after the war. This could not fail to disturb and confuse the Albanian population of these zones which had been subjected to the most inhuman suffering and extermination, both before the First World War and after the creation of the Yugoslav Kingdom. Information reached us from

the most varied sources that the Albanian population in its own territories in Yugoslavia had no faith in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, in its word and in the way in which it was acting in Kosova and elsewhere.

We considered it a proper act that in Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau (a region which the Serbs called Metohia) a provincial committee of the CPY for these zones had been set up, a committee which maintained direct links with the CC of the CPY. Directly or indirectly, this implied that the leadership of the CPY was not treating Kosova as an estate of Serbia, but in the same way as the other parts — Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, etc.

However, while the creation of the provincial committee at such a rank was a positive step, there was almost nothing Albanian in its composition and functioning, although the overwhelming majority of the population of Kosova consisted of Albanians. Both in the committee and in the other organs which were set up the Serbian or Montenegrin element predominated, at a time when the Serbian and Montenegrin population in Kosova comprised a small minority. Not only were the Albanians' patriotic sentiments and love for their Homeland, not to mention their desire for union with the Motherland, completely disregarded, but they were even branded «Great-Albanian sentiments». Of course, these and other factors could not fail to exert a negative influence, both on the development and growth of the organization of the Party for Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau, and on the extension of the participation of the Albanian population in the war. At the same time, the bands of četnici continued to wreak havoc on the Albanian villages and towns of these zones. The hesitation and cooling of the population there, their fear of the uncertain future, the feverish propaganda of reaction, the weaknesses and shortcomings in the organization and work of the Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosova-Metohia, etc. were convincing the leading cadres of the CPY more and more each day that their role in these zones had no weight at all.

Earlier I mentioned the meetings and quarrels with Vukmanović-Tempo in the spring and summer of 1943. The question of arousing the population of Kosova and the other Albanian regions to fight was another of Tempo's major «preoccupations». As for everything else, he vented his spleen on me, speaking in offensive terms about the «Albanians becoming a reserve of the enemy», but I did not spare him my opinions.

«Convince the people of Kosova that the war we are waging will lead to the solution of their problem in the way they want, give them assurances and guarantees about this, show them with concrete examples in your practical activity that you are leading them towards this solution,» I told him, «and you will see that the Kosovars will become the vanguard of the anti-fascist fighters. It has never been the custom of the Albanian people to unite with the enemy.»

«How can we convince them?!» he asked. «They all have their minds only on 'greater Albania'!»

«That they have their minds on Albania,» I replied, «this is no more than natural. And don't attempt to change their minds, because you will never succeed. For them the national question is vital and this is precisely the point that should be grasped. When they are sure that the fight is for the just solution of the national question, then they will certainly rise in the fight against the present enemy of Albania, Yugoslavia and all mankind — fascism. Second,» I continued, and I fixed my eyes on him, «we communists, in particular, must be extremely careful in the use of terms. In my opinion it is quite out of place for you to employ the expression 'greater Albania'.»

«Why?!» he asked. «What's wrong with it?!»

«All the evils that those who have created this 'term', the reactionaries of every kind — Albanian, Serbian, fascist, nazi or any other, include in it. Only they use this term in their own interests,» I replied.

«Please, you are offending me gravely,» he protested, «I don't understand you.»

«Then, I most sincerely regret,» I replied, «that you, the most 'expert' of us here on the problems of the Balkans, should say that you do not understand why this is wrong. At all times and regardless of who has used them, Comrade Tempo, the slogans and concepts 'greater Albania' or 'lesser Albania' have been anti-Albanian slogans and contrary to the objective historical truth. There has never been a 'greater Albania' or a 'lesser Albania' and there can be no talk about it. There has been and is only one Albania, which, regardless of the manipulations of reaction of all times, hence, regardless of whether it has been cut up, partitioned or attacked, still remains one, as a nation and country inhabited by people of the one blood, of the one language, of the one culture, of the one history, of the one psychological formation and national formation in general — by the Albanians.»

«Agreed, agreed!» he said bristling with indignation. «But I have heard this expression from you yourselves in conversations or seen it in your materials.»

«Then, I must tell you that you should read our materials and listen to us more carefully. We have never raised the question of 'greater Albania' or 'lesser Albania' and never will do so. For us there can be no discussion of this matter. On the contrary, in our talks and materials we attack and unmask the reactionaries of every kind who, through these anti-historical and anti-Albanian 'fabrications' try to put on the disguise of 'patriotism' and present themselves to the people as burning 'for the national cause'. With the slogan 'greater Albania' they want to alienate our people from the Party and sabotage the National Liberation War, both here and in Kosova and the other Albanian regions. In short, Comrade Tempo,» I concluded, «we use the term 'greater Albania' only on these occasions and in this sense, and will never permit it to be thought that since we attack the bearers of the pseudo-slogan 'greater Albania' we are allegedly in favour of some 'lesser Albania'. As I told you, we are neither for 'greater' nor for 'lesser' Albania. We are for the Albania which, both as a territory and as a nation, is one and one alone.»

«I understand, I understand,» he said, «but the Balkan region is very complicated, very tangled. I don't believe there is anyone who could clearly define the borders of the countries in this region in a way to satisfy and close the mouths of everybody.»

«That is true,» I replied, «but in the case of Albania we are not talking about a hill-side, a stream-bed or one or five villages of disputable ownership. Here we are talking about whole plains, mountain ranges, cities and zones which have been arbitrarily cut off from their own trunk and attached to an alien trunk. In this case no problem arises about the use of a knife or a scalpel lest some foreign vein be severed. Here we are talking about extensive and indisputably Albanian territories.»

«I cannot pretend that I know these problems well,» said the «Balkan expert». «I know only that the national question in the Balkans is extremely complex and we have to operate in all this complexity. My concern is the current war. The problem of raising Kosova in the war worries me greatly.»

«For us, too, this is one of the most serious preoccupations,» I told him. «But you can be sure that if you explain and re-explain to the Kosovars that they will decide their own future in the way they want themselves, all Kosova will rise in the war. You yourselves demanded that you should organize and lead the people there, otherwise, had they been put in contact with us, these problems would not have existed.»

Tempo could hardly contain himself while I was speaking like this, but there was one thing that impressed me most: on this problem he did not oppose me strongly; he seemed to have hesitations and vacillations. In principle he conceded openly that I was right and I was truly astonished when, some time later, he agreed that the only way to arouse Kosova in the war was to put its partisan forces under the command of the General Staff of the Albanian National Liberation Army.

This occurred during that long conversation when he put before us the platform of the idea which he was «mulling over in his head» about the «Balkan Staff». As I said, at that

meeting each of us expressed his own ideas quite freely, without any commitment to an official stand, and so, when we came round to the question of Kosova and I expressed my opinion, Tempo said to me:

«You are right. The partisan forces of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau should be under the command of your General Staff. This is the only way in which they can be raised to fight.»

«We have never had any doubts about that,» I said.

He was silent for a moment and then added:

«In any case, this is just an idea, a proposal which can be settled only within the framework of the 'Balkan Staff'. However, without consulting Comrade Tito, I can't take any concrete action about it.»

These last two «conditions» added even more to my suspicion that everything this Yugoslav said to us concealed sinister aims. He agreed «personally» that the partisan forces of Kosova should be placed under the leadership of our Staff (a thing which they had never mentioned previously), but only... in the conditions of the existence of the «Balkan Staff»! In plain words, this would mean: Let Kosova be aroused under the command of your staff, but your staff itself will be under the command of another big staff — the «Balkan Staff», which undoubtedly would have to be led by the new «strategist» of national liberation wars — Josip Broz Tito. (!)

The thought flashed through my mind: Can the purpose of this «staff» be to subordinate all our countries and the whole of the Balkans to its military and political command?

How right I was in my suspicions was proved a few months later: The idea of the «Balkan Staff» faded right out and immediately they changed their tune about the question of Kosova, too!

«In no way can the partisan forces of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia be placed under the command of the Albanian Staff!» Tito's men informed us.

However, there was no need or place for illusions and further debates. We had agreed to this solution from the out-

set and, if a new idea was expressed for a time, this was done in favour of the development of the war in those regions. Tempo himself, who for a moment pretended that he understood the correct way to enliven the movement in Kosovo and the other Albanian regions, was very soon to come out on the stage openly as a Great-Serb and anti-Albanian nationalist. Angered by the profound doubts which we expressed over Tito's idea of the «Balkan Staff» and even more by the fierce argument in connection with «opportunism», he intensified his attacks and accusations against our Party and its cadres. Now, however, he attacked us «at long range», from across the border, where he roamed about continually as Tito's «ambassador» in the Balkans and as the guard-dog of the erstwhile domains of the former Yugoslav Kingdom.

About the middle of September I received a letter of his, full of poison and spite about our partisan command and the forces which were operating in the region of Dibra, whom he accused of being «Great Albanians» and «chauvinists», and even went so far as to order us to take stern measures immediately, otherwise, he threatened, «things might reach the point of armed clashes»!

What great sins had our comrades and partisans committed to arouse all this fury in «ambassador» Tempo?

In September 1943 the units of our National Liberation Army, which were operating in the region of Dibra under the command of Comrade Haxhi Lleshi, liberated the city of Dibra with a powerful, lightning attack and, in co-operation with the Macedonian partisan detachments, fought heroically for the liberation of Kërçova, Tetova, Gostivar and Radostusha from the Italians and for the defence of these liberated zones from the German nazis, the Bulgarian fascists and their collaborators.

In all these zones, our Party and the Staff of the National Liberation Army of the Dibra region had long enjoyed great authority and prestige among the local population and, now that the cities and villages of the zone had been liberated by our forces, our authority and prestige were even further

enhanced. This did not occur with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Staff and, in this situation, we considered it reasonable that our comrades should act without losing time. On the basis of our instructions, they worked to establish the anti-fascist democratic state power in Dibra, immediately set about the organization of the national liberation council, assisted in the formation of the local command, in reviving the organization of the Party, etc. Besides Albanians, representatives of the Macedonian minority took part in the council and the command.

We acted in this way because we considered this to be fraternal internationalist collaboration between two sister parties and fraternal peoples. Had we not given these instructions, or were our comrades to act as Tempo wanted, then the victories achieved in the Dibra region would fall into the hands of reaction and, moreover, great problems would be created, both for us and the CPY, among the people. As I said, the CPY was entirely without influence or authority in Dibra, and without the aid and fight of our forces it would not have been able to do anything.

This was precisely what displeased Vukmanović-Tempo, who had gnawing fear that Dibra would be separated from Yugoslavia.

From end to end his letter stank of unrestrained chauvinism and megalomania. After pouring out all his wrath on our comrades and partisans, in a brutal, despotic tone he informed us that he had given the order that all the communists and partisans who were from the Albanian territories formerly annexed to Yugoslavia should place themselves at the disposal of the Macedonian staff; Haxhi Lleshi and his forces must withdraw from Dibra and could re-enter that zone only if and when it pleased Tempo; the national liberation council, newly formed in Dibra by our comrades, must break off its links with us and place itself at the disposal of Vukmanović, etc., etc. And as if this were not enough, at the end he accused us, the leadership of the CPA, of «failing to perform our duties», «ordered» us to take measures against Haxhi Lleshi and

then his lordship dared to close his letter with this formula of «politeness» à la Tempo: «You are obliged to do this as quickly as possible.»

I was by now well acquainted with the brutal nature and uncouth character of Tempo and I was not greatly astonished at the tone in which he had written to us. However, in regard to the problems which he raised and the orders which he issued, I had grave doubts that these could be the products of his head and character alone. However, I had no firm argument to carry my idea further. At the same time, I did not consider it in order at all to reply in the same tone. This was not the time to deepen the differences amongst us communists, but the time to intensify the war against the occupier. For this reason I immediately wrote a letter to Comrade Haxhi Lleshi in which I instructed him to exercise the greatest care and not permit any mistake in the relations with the Yugoslav comrades or over the problem of the Macedonian minority in Dibra.¹

Amongst other things, I instructed him, «You should carry out extensive work for the fraternization of Albanians and Macedonians in the war, because this is in the interests of our fraternal parties and peoples. In the concrete conditions, however,» I continued, «we do not consider in any way right Tempo's order for the withdrawal of the detachments of the ANLA from Dibra, simply for the 'reason' that this city lies within the borders of the old Yugoslav state. If we act as Tempo demands in his letter and give up Dibra, not only will the Macedonians not be able to master the situation, but reaction will deal heavy blows both to them and to us and, indeed, will fight mercilessly and even harder against us. For this reason,» I instructed him, «we must set up our national liberation state power, give the Macedonians the rights of a minority, try to ensure that they, too, take part in the national liberation council and in this way try to convince

¹ See Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, Tirana 1974, pp. 204-208; Eng. ed.

the people and win their trust. Only when our positions are strong, and when the positions of the Yugoslav comrades have been strengthened in Kosova, Macedonia and elsewhere, will our forces be able to withdraw, confident that reaction is not going to usurp the victories achieved. In regard to the eventual future of these zones,» I added in the letter, «that will be decided after the liberation of our countries according to the established principle.»

Those same days I sent Tempo a letter¹ in which, restraining my justified anger, I explained our correct view calmly and in a spirit of understanding.

This correct stand of the CC of the CPA infuriated Tempo even more. Bursting with all his old Slav chauvinism he wrote again to the CC of the CPA. This new letter² was an unrestrained outburst of chauvinism from start to finish. As his opening statement he said that «the main enemy» in Macedonia and Kosova was not the German occupier (?), but «Great-Albanian reaction» (!) and according to him «the main task» was the «routing» of this reaction. According to Tempo, our partisan forces which had liberated those regions were hindering the accomplishment of this task (!), and he went so far as to declare that the stand of our partisan forces was essentially in accord with the stand of reaction! After once again demanding that the order he had issued for the withdrawal of all Albanian partisans from Dibra and the dispersal of the national liberation council of the city set up with the aid of the CPA should be carried out, he said:

«Better to have our Yugoslav council which will carry out the Yugoslav line, even if it does not have authority, than to have a council which has authority but which does not stick to the Yugoslav line!»

While reading this letter aloud to some comrades of our

1 See Enver Hoxha, Selected Works, vol. 1, Tirana 1974, pp. 217-219, Eng. ed.

2 The original of this letter of S. V.-Tempo addressed to the CC of the CPA on September 23, 1943 is preserved in the CAP.

leadership, I saw that Miladin Popović, who was there with us, could hardly sit still.

«I have long been aware that Tempo is despotic and brutal,» said Miladin, annoyed, «but that he is such a frenzied Great-Slav had never crossed my mind.»

«This comes as a shock and surprise to us, too,» I told him. «He is no ordinary cadre, but a member of the top leadership of the Yugoslav party and poses as the organizer of everything in all these territories, both in Kosova and Macedonia, while poking his nose into Albania, Greece and Bulgaria, too.»

«He is a disgrace to the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and not a cadre of it,» burst out Miladin. «With these things he is doing and saying, he is lowering the prestige of the party.»

We were even more shocked by the closing statement of Tempo's letter. He made the accusation that we, the leadership of the Communist Party of Albania, had fallen into «Great-Albanian chauvinism», that we were «saboteurs» of the common cause and of Tempo's «proposals».¹

«...To hell with you and all your proposals!» swore Miladin. «These are not proposals, but shameful accusations. I shall write to Tito about this bastard who is ruining everything, not only here, but wherever he goes throughout the Balkans.»

We analysed the accusations in Tempo's letter with all due seriousness in a meeting we held with a number of comrades of our leadership and, on this occasion, I informed them about all his impermissible stands and made the essence

1 «You are silent about all the work and in this way you are behaving as saboteurs of our common cause,» wrote Tempo in this part of his letter dated September 23, 1943. He continued: «I proposed these measures to you in my first letter, but in response you wrote to Haxhi Lleshi that he should preach the *fraternization* of the Macedonian and Albanian peoples. Is that all you found necessary to say to Haxhi Lleshi...? Don't continue to sabotage my proposals, as you have done during these three months»!! CAP.

of the truth clear to them (in a letter I also informed the other comrades of our leadership, who were dispersed around the regions, about the main problems which I raised at this meeting).

«Especially his last letter at the end of September is outrageous,» I told the comrades, among other things. «Tempo is not writing as a communist when he accuses us of being 'saboteurs' and 'chauvinists'. Every word of his stinks of Great-Slavism. We have tried to listen to him dispassionately, keeping our tempers, but in the meetings he has had with us and now in the letters which he is sending us and with his brutal interference with our comrades in the region of Dibra, he is filling the cup. We are going to give him the reply he deserves for this, and if he considers himself a communist, let him reflect properly and pull himself together. This is for his own good, but especially for the good of our parties and the war of our peoples.»

«Can the Yugoslav leadership be aware of what Tempo is doing?» asked one of the comrades. «These accusations are very grave and it is hard to believe that he is speaking out of his own head about such delicate problems.»

«If you knew Tempo's head, you can believe that he is doing this himself,» replied Miladin.

«We have no contact with the leadership of the Yugoslav party,» I told the comrades, «so we have to judge only on what we know. Proceeding from this, I think we have no reason to confound Tempo with the sister Communist Party of Yugoslavia or with its leadership. However, this does not mean that we should keep quiet and endure his attacks and slanders. We have kept all Tempo's letters as well as copies of those we have sent him, and as soon as we find the possibility we shall communicate them to Tito. Let him judge all this filth of Tempo's...»

There is no need to dwell further on the unpleasant history of the quarrels and attacks between us and Vukmanović-Tempo at this period, because it is extremely long. Fortunately, it took place mostly through letters and they are pre-

served in the archives of our Party and some have been published. (Perhaps Tempo, too, as an inveterate champion of Great-Slavism, will have kept them to convince his successors about how and how much he fought for the designing and creation of the empire of «southern Slavs», an empire which, according to him and all Slavophiles, ought to begin from the waters of the Danube, be freshened by the winds of the Alps, the Carpathians and the Pindus mountains and, especially, be cooled by the waves and gentle breezes of the Black, the Aegaeon, the Ionian and the Adriatic seas.)

However, I was speaking about the documents and facts in our possession. They all provide incontestible evidence of the great prudence and maturity with which the leadership of our Party acted in that period in its relations with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the war of the fraternal peoples in Yugoslavia.

We remained loyal to the end to the principle that the question of borders and the status of Kosova and other Albanian regions of the former Yugoslav Kingdom should be settled after the war, always insisting, however, that the Anti-fascist National Liberation War should be extended to the maximum there, too. Since the CPY wanted to undertake this work itself, then it was up to that party to carry it out properly without fail. But this was not being done and, regrettably, the blame for this was being laid on the Albanian population which, it was alleged, had «Great-Albanian sentiments», «illusions about fascism», «tendencies to become a reserve of the nazis and reaction», and so on.

We could never reconcile ourselves to such assessments. Not just we, but all those people throughout the world who have had occasion to know even a little about the Albanians and our history, have always pointed out, as one of our most precious qualities, our freedom-loving spirit, hatred for enemies and irreconcilability with occupiers of any kind. Neither the Kosovars, nor the population of the Albanian regions of Macedonia, Montenegro, etc., could be any exception to this.

If the war there was still not assuming the desired exten-

sion, this was evidence of the great shortcomings in the work of those who had undertaken to lead and organize the Albanians in Yugoslavia in this war. In the summer and autumn of 1943, this became more than clear to us and we could not remain indifferent in the face of such a situation. For this reason we decided that Miladin should write a letter to Tito, in which he would present the opinion of the leadership of our Party, an opinion with which Miladin was in full accord. At the same time, both through letters and through those direct contacts we managed to secure with other comrades of the CPY, we again suggested our opinion to them. In essence, this was:

«There have been mistakes in the course which you have pursued hitherto in regard to Kosova and the other Albanian regions. Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau, etc., should immediately have their own leadership, emerged from the war, of which the majority must at all costs consist of Albanians; they should have their anti-fascist national liberation council, the composition of which should not be dictated, but should be elected in the most democratic way; and they should have their staffs and commands under the leadership of the Yugoslav General Staff. The party organization of the province should be formed, organized, and steered in the course of the war, under the CC of the CPY. The Albanians should fight in their own units under the flag of Albania, and their patriotic sentiments, their love for the Homeland, should be supported and publicized along with sentiments of internationalism and fraternal friendship with the other peoples of Yugoslavia. They should be told clearly and frankly that after Liberation, as a result of the war which they are going to wage, they, like all the others, will enjoy the complete and undeniable right to self-determination up to secession. Let the Communist Party of Yugoslavia convince the Albanians, like all the other nations of the former Yugoslavia, through facts and concrete actions that it has the courage, not only to publicly proclaim its principles, but also to defend and apply them.

«We think that if these things are not made clear to the

Albanian people of Kosova, they cannot be organized to fight properly against the occupiers, because up till now they have not formed any trust in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. If the Yugoslav internationalist communists do not see the national question of Kosova in this light, even in the future the Albanian people of Kosova will have no confidence in them. Hence, the key to the successful development of the war in Kosova and in the Dukagjin Plateau is to recognize to them openly their right to decide their own fate in the future, a right which must be stated clearly to include all the possibilities — from unity with the Motherland — Albania, to living on their own, if they wish. Any other solution the Albanian people of Kosova do not accept and consider unjust and, in reality, we think that it is unjust. Our opinion is that Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau, and the Albanian territories in Macedonia which border on Albania and are inhabited by Albanians should be united with Albania after Yugoslavia is liberated from the clutches of nazi-fascism. Only such a course will make the Albanians who live in Yugoslavia fight heroically.»

What was the reply of the Yugoslav comrades towards these just and principled ideas which we suggested to them?

As for Tempo, of course, he was even more infuriated, but we did not hope for or expect anything different from him. But to our astonishment, we learned that on these issues the others were the equivalent of Tempo.

At that period, a letter reached us from the member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPY Ivan Milutinović (at that time he worked in Montenegro), in which he sought our urgent material aid, etc. for the movement and the Yugoslav partisan forces in Montenegro. He told us that during the recent German offensive they had sustained very heavy losses and he described our aid as very necessary and important. On this occasion, he added in the letter, it would be good if he could meet and talk with some comrade of the leadership of our Party and our General Staff.

I immediately summoned Ramadan Çitaku and Vasil

Shanto, both leading cadres of our Party at that time, and charged them with going to the meeting which Milutinović proposed.

«Inform Comrade Milutinović,» I told them, «that our leadership has decided to fulfil all the requests for material aid which they made to us. Tell him that we are comrades and co-fighters for the same cause and we share weal and woe together, just as we have done up till now. Then,» I told the comrades, «listen to what problems he raises and give him your opinion about them on the basis of the stands and line of our Party. At the same time,» I instructed them, «irrespective of whether or not Milutinović opens up the subject, you must put before him the proposals of our Party in connection with the question of the war and its prospects in Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau and the other regions populated by Albanians. You know our opinions, so present them as clearly and accurately as possible. Tell him,» I instructed them, «that you are speaking in the name of the leadership of the CPA with a comrade who will certainly transmit our opinions to the leadership of his party.»

They set out and after 15 or 20 days they returned. To say that they were angry is putting it mildly.

«Another Tempo in Montenegro!» Ramadan told me. «He grabbed the money immediately, while everything else he rejected. He did not consider any of our proposals and suggestions correct. He accused us of being 'Great-Albanians', of 'chauvinism', of... In short,» said Baca [Ramadan Çitaku], «he spoke exactly as if he had Tempo prompting him.»

«And at the same time they accepted our aid!» said Spiro Moisiu angrily. At that time he was commander of the General Staff of our Army. «With all that money which we sent them so generously, we could have equipped two partisan brigades with clothing and weapons. We have our comrades barefoot and in rags...»

«We did not give it to Ivan, Spiro,» I said to pacify him. «We gave it to the war, to our Yugoslav partisan brothers.»

«He not only accepted nothing of what we put forward and levelled a hundred accusations against us,» added Vasil Shanto, «but he did not refrain from making accusations against Comrade Miladin, too. 'You should not have brought us such opinions,' he told us. 'I don't understand what Miladin has been telling you?! Or has he turned into a Great-Albanian, too?' He was boiling with anger and said, 'I order that Miladin should come as quickly as possible to meet me. He is not acting at all as an internationalist communist!'»

«What!» exclaimed Miladin. «I am to go to Ivan to learn internationalism?! That will be the day! I shall go directly to Tito and tell him about all these vile things that Tempo and Milutinović are up to. Let him hear what this kind of leaders are cooking up!»

«We opposed his order about Comrade Ali,»¹ added Baca. «We told him that in these conditions it was too dangerous. 'If you want him killed on the way by the fascists who are on the look-out for him everywhere, or want him to die of the illness he has (Miladin suffered from tuberculosis), then we'll transmit your order to him,' we told him. After this Milutinović backed down.»

For the first time I had serious doubts that we were being gravely deceived in our communist faith and sincerity, both in connection with the ways of developing the current war in Kosova and other Albanian regions annexed to Yugoslavia in the past and in the way in which the question of these Albanian territories would be finally settled after the war. I had reasons for this.

Since we considered the anti-Albanian attitudes of Tempo the «personal» symptoms of an element who suffered from the disease of chauvinism, how could we consider the identical stands and expressions of the member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPY Ivan Milutinović anything different?! Right from the outset, with complete communist trust, we had

1 The pseudonym of Miladin Popović during the years of his stay in Albania was Ali Gostivari.

agreed, for the sake of our common struggle, we would not touch the question of borders during the war. We were keeping our word, but why were the Yugoslav comrades doing the opposite?! Why did they jump up infuriated when we demanded that, for the sake of the development of the war, the legitimate rights of the Albanians should be openly recognized, proclaimed and defended?!

«Those two are neither the Party nor its leadership,» said Miladin to calm my fears. «They think differently at the centre, you'll see.»

We hoped and wished whole-heartedly that this was truly so. Tito must have received our letters, but we were receiving no replies.

«They have major matters to deal with!» Koçi Xoxe excused them. «They have aroused a whole Yugoslavia and have to manoeuvre.»

Suddenly, however, from the end of October to the middle of December 1943 a flood of letters arrived, addressed to the CC of the CPA, to me and to Miladin Popović. They were signed either by the CC of the CPY or by Tito himself. In essence, all of them raised only the problem of Kosova and the other Albanian regions of the former Yugoslavia. For a moment it seemed as if the CC of the CPY had established relations with us only over this problem.

Tito's letters, in particular, were the most advanced. While maintaining the same stand as Tempo and Milutinović, being commander-in-chief, Tito had reserved for himself the right to employ graver terms and accusations against us than his now well-known spokesmen. However, in his letters Tito was more cunning. In one of his letters, after «pleasing» us with the expression that he was not opposed in principle to «the Albanians of Kosova having the right to go where and how they wish», he immediately made the accusation that we, the leadership of the CPA, allegedly maintained «the stand which the reactionary Albanian bourgeoisie maintains» (!!). To «back» this accusation, he claimed that we had allegedly stated that Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau, Dibra, etc. «should be

united with Albania immediately.» «To raise the question of unification today,» he continued, «means to carry grist to the mill of the reactionaries and the occupiers.»¹

This was a deliberate distortion of the truth for ulterior motives. Neither Miladin in the letter which he had sent Tito, nor we had at any time raised the problem of unification «today», «immediately». No, we demanded that «today», «immediately» the CC of the CPY should publicly proclaim the legitimate right of the people of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia to self-determination up to secession «tomorrow», that is, after the war and as a result of the war. This is what we demanded, this was the main thing for the moment. What Tito alleged was a distortion of the truth.

His entire letter was evidence of anti-historical and anti-Marxist efforts to dodge the issue. Tito was very annoyed that, in the letters we sent him, we compared the question of the stand of the CPY towards Kosova, etc. with the stand which that same party maintained towards Istria.

«No,» Tito waved his admonishing finger at us, «the case of Istria is completely different from that of Kosova and Metohia.»

How does the truth stand?

Istria, a peninsula on the Adriatic, was under Austria up until 1918 and in 1919 was given to Italy. Since Slovenes comprised the majority of its population, during the war the CC of the CPY raised the question of its unification with Yugoslavia, arguing that it had been annexed to Italy through violence.

But was the annexation of Kosova and the other Albanian territories in 1913 not an identical annexation through violence by the imperialists?! Of course, it was! Then, why did the CPY consider it right to demand the «immediate» uni-

1 The quotation is from Tito's letter addressed to the CC of the CPA on December 6, 1943, which is preserved in the CAP. The same allegation, using the identical words, had been made in an earlier letter which the CC of the CPY sent to the CC of the CPA on October 25, 1943.

fication with Yugoslavia of a zone inhabited by Slavs and did not consider right the analogous case of Kosova and other regions torn from Albania?!

The «arguments» which Tito provided were ludicrous. Istria, according to him, ought to be united with Yugoslavia because it had «a developed revolutionary movement», while in Kosova this was not the case! Perhaps it was true that there was such a developed movement in Istria (assuming that Tito's statement was correct, since I knew nothing concrete about the situation there), but then the question arose: why was the same thing not happening in Kosova?! With unshakeable conviction I repeat that, if the CPA had made the same call to the population of Kosova as the CPY made to the population of Istria, then Tito would have been obliged to rack his brains to fabricate some other «argument». As likely as not he would have said, «Kosova cannot be united with Albania since the revolutionary movement in Kosova is more developed»! Indeed, if the CPY itself, let alone we, were to do the most essential and elementary thing towards Kosova, that is, openly declare its right to self-determination up to secession, then matters would be entirely different.

But this Tito and the party which he led did not do, either at the start or at the finish. Why did they not do it?! Here, without doubt, all that burden of Great-Slav sentiments which the CPY, regrettably, had inherited completely and was defending and developing further, patching it up with slogans of «unity-fraternity», «internationalism», etc., etc., played a major role. Later, however, we were to be convinced that they did not act as Marxists towards Kosova and the other Albanian regions for other, even baser, aims. A powerful revolutionary movement in Kosova and the other Albanian regions would constitute a great obstacle to the sinister plans which the Yugoslav leadership was hatching up in secrecy.

Aloud, Tito and Co. «complained» that Kosova «was not rising to fight», but on the quiet this fact certainly pleased them. Later, when the moment came, Tito's army would find

it easier to justify before public opinion the persecution and extermination of thousands of «counter-revolutionaries» and «nationalist and Ballist brigades» than to persecute and exterminate thousands of Kosovar fighters incorporated in partisan anti-fascist brigades, who after Liberation would demand unification with the Motherland — Albania. And this is what occurred. At the end of 1944 and during 1945 the Yugoslav National Liberation Army wrought havoc on the population of Kosova and other Albanian regions. This was bound to touch off, as it did, the justified mass revolt of the peasantry and the Kosovar partisan units. Thousands of Albanians refused to submit to the new chauvinist domination and terror. And this situation was exploited by the *bajraktars*, the Ballists, the brigands and agents of fascism, who for their own interests tried to collaborate with and deceive the masses. Hypocritically seizing on the existence of this reactionary scum, the Titoites tried to blacken and attack this whole justified revolt of the masses as a Ballist movement. Undoubtedly, the elements of reaction deserved the reprisals and the bullet. They were the remnants of the old world, the reserve of reaction, which were being thrown into action for truly counter-revolutionary, anti-Albanian and anti-Yugoslav aims. But the thousands who, through the irony of history, were rising justly in the first anti-Titoite revolt, were neither counter-revolutionaries nor Ballists. These thousands were people of Kosova, Dibra, Ulqin, etc., etc., whom the mistaken political line pursued during all the years of the war by the CPY and the new Titoite terror disillusioned and, quite rightly, caused once again to demand the solution of their national question. Moreover, under the mask of the fight to eliminate «counter-revolutionary forces», the special detachments of the Yugoslav NLA poured fire and bullets indiscriminately upon all the patriots and other honest Albanians of those parts, upon all those who dared express their legitimate surprise: «Why should we Albanians be under Yugoslavia?!»

But let us return to Tito's letter of the late autumn 1943.

Its second «argument» about why the question of Kosova

could not be compared with that of Istria was that «it is undesirable for it to come out openly, that between us and democratic anti-imperialist Albania there is a problem over Kosova and Metohia»! What astonishing logic! To put it bluntly, we must not mention this matter, must keep it secret, because betrayals and plots can be carried out more easily in secret, without giving us a bad name!

I have rarely seen Miladin Popović so downcast as at those moments when we read and reread the letter of the main leader of the CPY. He kept his eyes on the ground and had gone deathly pale.

«Perhaps Tito has not written this letter himself, perhaps others have written it for him, perhaps...»

It was a time when we, too, did not want to believe that the CC of the CPY and a man such as Tito had written this letter, it was a time when, out of the respect we had for them from afar, we were ready to excuse them. But there it was, written in black and white with the signatures below.

Nevertheless, grasping at expressions that «the Albanians will have the right to go where and how they wish», that the problem of unification should not be raised «immediately», «today», etc., we managed to ease our qualms. However, in the course of the letter, after he «instructed» us on what we had made the priority issue since 1941, that is, «the main question now is that of the war against the occupiers», Tito cunningly, but quite clearly, implied that the question of the Albanian regions and population in Yugoslavia had been predetermined by the CC of the CPY: «Today, fraternal love towards the heroic peoples of Yugoslavia and towards the joint war against the German occupiers should be cultivated in the Albanian people in Kosova and Metohia,» he wrote. «The new Yugoslavia which is being created will be a country of free peoples, and thus there will be no room for national oppression of the Albanian minority, either.»¹

1 From the letter of the CC of the CPY to the CC of the CPA on October 25, 1943. CAP.

In plain language this meant: the CC of the CPY has determined the borders of the future Yugoslav state and they will be what they were. Hereafter the «Albanian minority», that is, Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau, Dibra, etc., etc., will remain under the «new Yugoslavia which is being created»!

But after this, what was left of the earlier statements of this same Tito about guaranteeing the right of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia to self-determination up to secession?! What was left of the solemn «pledges» and «assurances» that this problem would be dealt with after the war?! Could it be that such expressions as «cannot be done today», or «immediately», concealed attempts to deceive us and to avoid ever carrying out what had been declared would be settled «tomorrow», that is, after the war?

We discussed these matters at length, along with scores of questions to which Tito's letter and the well-known stands of others gave rise, and we were becoming more and more convinced that the Yugoslav leadership was not acting on this question in a Marxist way or in a comradely spirit.

We had always behaved towards them in the most correct way, had listened to and believed their declarations of principle, were interested in having the warmest fraternal relations with them, but we could never permit the violation of principles for the sake of friendship and that, in the context of principles, the legitimate rights of our Party and people should be trampled on. Hence, we decided that on this occasion, too, we should express our opinion publicly, without directly attacking the Yugoslav leadership and without giving any grounds for them to accuse us of «nationalism» and «Great-Albanian» tendencies. We considered that the best way to do this would be an appeal by the CC of our Party directly to the people of Kosova and Metohia. In the past, too, we had addressed open calls and leaflets to our brothers in Kosova and the other Albanian regions (indeed one of these we had signed jointly with the CC of the CPY), in which we called on them to take up arms in the

general war for freedom. In them, however, we had confined ourselves simply to calling on them to fight and to fraternize with the other peoples, while we had said nothing about the declaration of the right of self-determination up to secession, because we hoped and believed that the CC of the CPY would do this first, as it ought to. It had undertaken to lead the war in these zones, therefore, it was up to it to proclaim this declaration of principle. However, now that we were convinced that the CC of the CPY was not going to make such a declaration, we decided to have our say. Therefore, we wrote the appeal, printed it in thousands of copies and distributed it mainly in Kosova, Dibra and the other Albanian regions of the former Yugoslavia.

«Your Albanian brothers,» we said in it, among other things, «those who are shedding their blood in the cities and mountains of Albania for the freedom of our people... call on you to take up arms and unite with the other peoples — the Serbs, the Montenegrins, and attack the occupiers and the traitors, attack all those who want to divide and split you.»

Up to this point we were convinced that even the Yugoslav comrades would be quite content. But if they were consistent in adhering to the Leninist principles on the national question, they had no reason to be discontented over what we went on to say to our Albanian brothers.

«The only road to salvation and to fulfilling your desires,» we concluded the appeal, «is through the war which you will wage against the occupiers together with the other peoples in Yugoslavia, through the national liberation war which will secure you the right to self-determination up to secession.

«So, unite! Where there is unity, there is salvation!»¹

The words of our Communist Party and the Albanian communists in Kosova and other regions warmed the hearts of the population there and encouraged them to rise more vigorously in the anti-fascist war.

¹ From the appeal of the CC of the CPA addressed to the people of Kosova and Metohia, autumn 1943. CAP.

From that time we retain many memories and letters in which ordinary people, communists and patriots from Kosova, Dibra, Ulqin, Struga, Tetova, Gostivar, Plava, Gucia, etc., told us in most ardent words about their love for their Motherland and our Party, congratulated us on our successes in the war against the occupiers, and openly expressed the general readiness among the masses of the patriotic Albanian people in those regions to take part in the war against fascism. But in all those letters, in some of them with kid-gloves and through insinuations (they did not want to hurt our feelings of friendship for the CPY), in some of them quite openly, one could sense the profound doubts and fear which existed among the population of those zones for the future. Distrust of the CPY and its leadership could be sensed in them. Likewise, our comrades whom we sent to Kosova and the other regions inhabited by Albanians on party work or to give their assistance, as well as the Albanians of those parts who came to us, openly expressed their discontent and reservations towards the CPY.

«They bombard us with questions,» Haxhi Lleshi told me at a meeting I had with him at that time. «'Why doesn't the Communist Party of Yugoslavia come out openly in favour of our cause?' they ask us. 'Why don't they make any mention of the question of the status of Kosova, Metohia, Dibra, etc., at least on those occasions when they proclaim the right to self-determination for the other nations of the former Yugoslav Kingdom?'' 'Who can guarantee whether the war which we are waging, and should wage more vigorously, will resolve our age-old sacred cause?' We try to answer them,» continued Haxhi, «but believe me, Comrade Enver, there are some things which we don't know how to answer them. We hesitate lest we unwittingly harm the Yugoslav party.»

«We must tell our brothers the truth,» I said to Haxhi. «First of all, we must explain to them the stand of our Party on this problem. We should tell them that we think and believe that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia has

the same view of the problem of the national question. We should explain to our brothers that the main thing now is the war against the common occupier. That is our main enemy. Hence, the main enemy of Albanians, Macedonians, Serbs, and all...»

At the same time, on the request of the Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau, and of the Macedonian Staff, we continued to send more and more party comrades to work in these zones, either among the civilian population, and more especially, as cadres in the çetas, battalions, and other military units which were being set up. Çetas and battalions of our National Liberation Army, time after time, penetrated deep into Montenegro, Kosova and Macedonia, carrying out bold and important actions alone or in collaboration with military units subordinate to the Yugoslav Staff. This comradeship-in-arms, without discrimination, had a positive effect on both the Albanian and non-Albanian populations in those regions. I clearly recall the moment when I parted with my unforgettable comrade, Hajdar Dushi in the autumn of 1943. Hajdar, son of a patriotic family from Kosova, grew up in the Albanian communist movement and immediately after the founding of the Party became one of its most capable cadres. After he worked in Tirana and Durrës for the organization of the Party, in the summer of 1942 we sent him to Berat as delegate of the CC of the CPA to assist the regional committee there. The fascists captured him, tortured and imprisoned him, but Hajdar Dushi withstood all their cruelty heroically. We freed him from prison through a daring action and, after the 1st National Conference of the CPA, he was appointed secretary of the regional committee of Durrës. We had great need for his experience, determination and ability, but, conscious of the aid which we had to give the cause of the war in Kosova, we summoned him and informed him:

«From this moment you are no longer a cadre of the Party for which you have shed your blood and made every

sacrifice. You are to go to Kosova and enter into contact with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.»

«Long live communism!» declared the unforgettable Hajdar Dushi, with tears in his eyes, and raised his clenched fist in salute.

He was right to weep, he was being rent from the bosom of his Party. But a great mission awaited him. He went, worked, fought and gave his life with honour and glory, remaining loyal to the end to the cause for which he was sent: to arouse the people of Kosova to drive out the foreign occupiers, and to realize their age-old aspirations.

Scores of other comrades went to Kosova and the other regions before and after Hajdar Dushi. They, too, fought and worked, made their contribution to the mobilization and leadership of the people in the war, honestly expressed the aspirations of their own people in those years, and put their signatures to documents at the important forums to which their people had sent them to consecrate their legitimate right for the future. After the war, however, events took a different course and the Titoite betrayal did its destructive work even amongst some of those comrades. I do not want to delve into the consciousness of those elements or into the dramatic process of their transformation. But in the days of May 1981, while I was leafing over the pages of these notes written years earlier, I was reminded, not accidentally, of an event which took place 40 years earlier.

It was the difficult May of 1942, the days when the fascists had just killed our beloved comrade Qemal Stafa. At those moments the terror and savagery of the occupiers, especially in Tirana, was unprecedented. Searches and arrests went on day and night. Precisely at the moments when the fascists thought they had struck our Communist Party a mortal blow, among other things, we carried out a sensational action to commemorate Comrade Qemal Stafa in the Secondary School of Tirana at that time. We organized a commemorative meeting in which all the pupils of that inexhaustible hotbed of the war and the revolution took part.

At the meeting, according to the instructions we had given, a young communist, a former pupil of that school, who had now gone underground, got up and spoke.

«The fascists want to extinguish our burning desire for freedom, the fascists want to deny our people the right to exist, the right to fight for their future. They have killed our beloved Comrade Qemal, they are killing and imprisoning the finest sons and daughters of this land, but in our hearts we will build up to ever greater fury our hatred for those who oppress us, kill us and torture us,» declared this underground comrade, and he continued: «But we are not deceived. We are not afraid of their violence and terror. There is no force which can defeat us, we are rising in the fight for a just cause...»

This youth was a Kosovar, Veli Deva. I did not know him at first hand, but as political secretary for the Regional Committee of Tirana I was fully informed about the action and its organization.

And precisely this Veli Deva, who in May 1942, in the name of the Communist Party of Albania, issued a call to the Tirana Secondary School youth never to be conquered by the fascist violence, but to rise in the just war for freedom, 40 years later, in May 1981, now in the role of head of the Provincial Committee of the LCY for Kosova, goes legally into the secondary schools and the University of Prishtina in order to put down the lawful outburst of the people and youth of Kosova with violence and demagogy.

I shall speak later about the Bujan Conference at the end of 1943, where the legitimate representatives of the people of Kosova met, discussed and took very correct and very important decisions both for those moments and for the just solution of the problem of Kosova after the war and as a result of the war. One of the organizers of this Conference, and one of the first to sign its lawful and important decisions was Fadil Hoxha. He was one of those members of one of our former communist groups who was among the first to return to his birthplace, Kosova, and fought and

contributed to the mobilization and leadership of the people of Kosova in the war, and was among those who signed with their own hands what the war and the people of Kosova themselves demanded.

In the letters which the Provincial Committee for Kosova and Metohia (the Dukagjin Plateau), one of the main leaders of which was Fadil Hoxha, sent us during the years of the war, the distrust which was felt in Kosova towards the CPY and the Yugoslav partisans because of the savage Great-Serb oppression, and because «the 'Skojevska'¹, also, have killed innocent Albanians», was openly expressed. According to one letter, a large majority of the people of Kosova said, «Let anyone, who wants to, come, just as long as we get Yugoslavia off our backs,» and continued «we are waiting for you to assist us.»² When Fadil Hoxha came to Tirana after the liberation of the country and I received him and had a long talk with him in my office in the Prime Minister's Department, he expressed to me this same distrust, these same feelings and opinions of the people of Kosova towards the CPY through his own mouth. He complained about the grave situation that existed in Kosova, about the situation of persecution, with reprisals and terror against Albanians that prevailed in the province, and told me openly that «we do not see any difference, and there is none, with the past when we suffered under the Yugoslavia of the kraljs.»

And this same Fadil Hoxha now, in the spring of 1981 raises his hand and gives his vote in the Presidency of the SFR of Yugoslavia, to send in the tanks and bayonets of the Great-Serb army to kill, oppress and put down the people and youth in Kosova who rose to demand respect for their rights. And as if to display openly his complete metamorphosis during these 40 years, Fadil Hoxha, with his head and his pocket completely Titoized, went so far in his

1 Yugoslav communist youth.

2 From the letter of the Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosmet sent to the CC of the CPA, September 6, 1943. CAP.

defence of the Great-Serb spokesmen that he stood before the Albanian demonstrators of 1981 and their dead and called them... «Scum!»

But what are these people and this revolted youth demanding today, 36 years after their «liberation»? They are demanding that their constitutional, economic, and socio-cultural situation should be put on the right course within the laws of the Yugoslav Federation, demanding to have the status of a republic within the SFR of Yugoslavia, demanding that precisely those rights that were put on the agenda at Bujan in 1943, but which Tito left only on paper, should be realized, demanding an end to the terror and violence in the streets, in the schools, in their homes and in the prisons. Precisely on this account they are called «irredentists», «nationalists», «counter-revolutionaries», precisely on this account tanks and bayonets were sent in against their peaceful demonstrations, precisely on this account the Fadil Hoxhas and Veli Devas of 1942 and 1943 betray themselves and their people, betray the honesty of their youth, betray the blood shed in the years of the war and the blood which was and is being shed this spring in Kosova.

However, I am deviating from my theme. I made this digression in time simply because these days, when the situation in Kosova is so tense and I had to go back over my notes and reminiscences of the war years, automatically the situation at that time contrasted itself with the present situation. If the situation in Kosova has not been settled and put on the right course in all these 40 years, this has occurred because, since the time of the war, the problem of Kosova was presented in a distorted way by the CC of the CPY and was settled in a distorted way, from nationalist and chauvinist positions, contrary to the desire and will of the people of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia.

Therefore, let us go back to those years. At that time there was one moment when we thought that the question of Kosova was on the way to a just solution. This has to do with the 1st Conference of the National Liberation Council

for Kosova and Metohia, held at Bujan from December 31, 1943 to January 2, 1944.

The Conference took place under the leadership of the Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosova and, on its request, the organization of the CPA for Tropoja and the Command and party organization of the «Perlat Rexhepi» partisan Battalion of Shkodra, which operated in the high-lands of Gjakova, gave great assistance in the organization of the Conference.

After fiery discussions, which went on for three days, the Conference decided to call on the people of the province to rise in a body against the German occupiers and traitors, shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Albanian people, while uniting firmly around the National Liberation Council.

Amongst other things the resolution of the conference proclaimed the right of the people of Kosova to self-determination up to secession.¹ This resolution was adopted unanimously by the delegates and was signed by all the members of the Council.²

1 That document contained among other things: «Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau is a province inhabited for the most part by an Albanian population, which today, as always, wishes to be united with Albania. Hence, it is our duty to show the correct course the Albanian people must follow to realize their aspirations. Therefore, the only way for the Albanian people of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau to be united with Albania is to fight together with the other peoples of Yugoslavia in the war against the blood-thirsty nazi occupiers and those in their pay, because this is the only way to win the freedom through which all the peoples, hence, the Albanian people, too, will have the possibility to decide their own future through the right of self-determination up to secession.» (*From the resolution of the 1st Conference of the National Liberation Council for Kosova also published in the book «People's Council of the Autonomous Region of Kosova-Metohia 1943-1953», p. 10, Prishtina 1955.*)

2 The Council was made up of 51 members of whom 43 Albanians, while the others were Serbs, Montenegrins, etc. Mehmet Hoxha, Pavle Jovičević, Rifat Berisha, Xhevdet Doda, Fadil Hoxha, Hajdar Dushi,

The news of the holding of this Conference and its important decisions reached us quickly, too, and understandably, this was a great joy for us. We saw that for the first time a correct and confident step had been taken, which was giving an impulse to the extension of the war in these zones and setting the problem of their future on the course to a Marxist solution.

We thought that at last the CC of the CPY had taken a correct view of the problem of Kosova and the other Albanian regions and that, since it had not considered it opportune to come out itself with the declaration about the right to self-determination, it had left this to the people of Kosova themselves through their lawful representatives.

After this, of course, the old «fear» of the Yugoslav leadership that reaction and the Great-Slav nationalist elements inside or outside the CPY might accuse it of «destroying» Yugoslavia, was averted, too. The decisions which were taken and published by the lawful representatives of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau, who included not only Albanians, but also representatives of the Serbian and Montenegrin minorities in these regions, were a very effective weapon in the hands of the CPY. Now it had a great opportunity to welcome the decisions of the Bujan Conference as an expression of the will of the population of that zone, and in this way, to finally wipe out that mistake which it should not have allowed, at least since 1941. In February 1944 we published a special article about this important event in a bulletin of «Zëri i popullit». In it we expressed our most ardent congratulations on the Bujan Conference, again appealed to our brothers in Kosova to rise with greater fury in the war and, not without purpose, we emphasized and welcomed the main decisions of this Conference.

Amongst other things, after pointing out that «The National Liberation Council for Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau

Zekerije Rexha, etc., were among those in the Presidium of the Council, who have signed this resolution (*Ibidem*, p. 12).

has undertaken to show the people the right road which they must follow to realize their own aspirations,» the article emphasized that the war against the nazi occupiers and its stooges was and remained the only way to win the freedom through which all the peoples, hence, the Albanian people of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau, too, «...will have the possibility to decide their own future through the right of self-determination up to secession» (underlined in the original).*

As for the attitude of the CC of the CPY towards this event, we were hearing not a word. Much later, we would learn the truth, which like all the rest, was extremely bitter. As soon as it had heard of the decisions of the Bujan Conference, the CC of the CPY reacted furiously and demanded that its declaration on the right of the people of Kosova to self-determination up to secession should not be published in any way. The affirmation of the representatives of the people themselves meeting in the conference that, «the people of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau... today, as always, wish to be united with Albania», had to be erased from the resolution on the order of the CC of the CPY and must not be published. The reason was that the leadership of the CPY headed by Tito, irrespective of a series of «principled» declarations about the «just» solution of the national question of the nations and nationalities of the former Yugoslavia, had always worked and aspired to keep Yugoslavia intact and, indeed, to extend it further. In particular, the violation and rejection of the principles on the national question by the CPY was consecrated at the 2nd Meeting of the AVNOJ at Jajce at the end of November 1943.

It is neither my duty nor the purpose of these notes to analyse and assess all the decisions of that meeting. Neither is it my duty to evaluate whether its main decision on «the construction of a new Yugoslavia on the federal principle» which, it was claimed, would ensure «equality for Serbs,

* Bulletin of «Zëri i popullit», 3rd Year, No. 33, February 7, 1944. CAP.

Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins», etc. was taken in a right or wrong way.

The Serbs, the Croats, the Macedonians and the Slovenes have assessed this decision and if they wish let them assess and reassess it as they deem most correct. What I want to point out is that with this decision, at least the inclusion of Kosova, the Dukagjin Plateau and other Albanian regions within «the new federal Yugoslavia» was done just as arbitrarily, this time, too, as it had been done by the imperialist powers in the Treaties of Versailles and London several decades earlier. In taking this decision the will of the people of Kosova, Dibra, etc., was totally disregarded. Only the will of the CC of the CPY was taken into account. No representative of Kosova and the other Albanian regions of the former Yugoslavia took part in this meeting, indeed, the representatives of the Provincial Committee of the CPY for Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau were not even informed about it.

The decision of this meeting was not made known to us for a long time. At the same time, the fact that the Bujan Conference was organized a full month after the Jajce Meeting and took decisions which were contrary to the «will» of Jajce, but in conformity with the will of the people of Kosova, shows that neither the people of Kosova, nor the leaders of this zone, knew anything about what had been decided behind their backs by the CC of the CPY.

This is one of the most flagrant examples of the permanent perfidy of the Yugoslav leadership towards the Albanians.

Our brothers, the Albanians of Kosova and the other regions should have been represented at Jajce without fail and their right to freely have their say should have been respected. There they should have been allowed to express what they thought about their own future: Would they unite with Albania, or would they remain under the «new Yugoslavia»? And, if they expressed themselves in favour of the latter solution, they should also have expressed themselves freely, with a will, not dictated by anybody on how they would build their future under Yugoslavia. That is, in this

case, they should have expressed themselves whether they wanted to be a separate republic, like Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, etc., wanted to be an autonomous unit, or wanted to be dependent on another unit, etc., etc. In short, this should have been the most elementary act, which the CC of the CPY should have done in advance to ensure that the extensive Albanian regions were represented at Jajce. Over years, the leaders of the CPY had assured us that the will of this population would be respected and taken into account in everything. But, as I said, this was not done and they flagrantly broke their word. Hence, this act can have no other name but perfidy.

Still worse, although everything about the future of Kosova had been decided at Jajce at the end of November 1943, even in 1944 letters and messages were sent to us from Tito and his henchmen (as I said only about the question of Kosova) in which the truth was hidden, in which they used such phrases as «the question should not be raised today», «but tomorrow», that the Albanians of Kosova «will be free to go where and how they want» (as if they were gypsies, without a homeland and possessions, and not an autochthonous people who were born, brought up, killed or died on their own soil).

Time was to prove that we were deceived not only in regard to the past period. While concealing the truth from us, while presenting the matter as something «for tomorrow», the Yugoslav leadership was preparing for more ferocious secret actions. Now Tito's closest collaborators and his official biographers write that he was greatly «concerned» about the question of Kosova, especially in 1944-1945, that he was «vacillating», «hesitating», etc. What these «vacillations» and «concerns» of Tito's were we do not know, but logic tells us that Tito and his henchmen were not in the least concerned about the «special» problem of Kosova at that period (or later). They had decided this. Their concern had to do with the other part of Albania, hence, with studying ways and means to place the whole of Albania under the domination

of Yugoslavia. This, too, we were to learn later, indeed this was to constitute one of the most dramatic chapters of our battle with the Titoites.

This is how matters stood at the close of 1943 and at the close of the period up till the summer of 1944 in our relations with the leadership of the CPY.

Here someone might say that for the whole period from August 1943 until summer 1944 only one side, one aspect of relations with the CPY — that of the question of Kosova and other Albanian regions annexed to Yugoslavia, has been touched on. But why is there no mention of other aspects of these relations? What collaboration, what exchange of ideas, what accord or conflict with the CPY was there during this period, for example on the problems of the Party, the war, the Front the state, etc., etc.?!

The fact is that after the bitter conflict with Vukmanović-Tempo at Kucaka in August 1943 up till August 1944, that is a full year, no one was sent by the Yugoslav leadership to hold consultations, exchange experience or anything else of this sort with us. The fact is, also, that during this period, we did not receive any letter or other special material from the Yugoslav leadership which dealt with such problems as those of the life of the Party, the army and the national liberation war, the organization and functioning of the new state power which we were consolidating, the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, etc., etc. In short, in all these aspects, each party went about its own business as it thought and judged best, on the basis of principles on which it operated and the reality of its own country.

Naturally, when I say that there is nothing to mention from these aspects, this does not mean to say that throughout this whole period there was a total loss of contact and information between our two parties. No. From time to time, various materials reached us, materials which spoke about the life and organization of the CPY, the Yugoslav National Liberation Army, the organization of the new state power, etc., etc. Likewise, there were occasions when, apart from

«Radio Moscow», we picked up the broadcasts from the «Free Yugoslavia» Radio Station and heard some communique or commentary about the life and activity of the CPY and the Yugoslav partisan army.

For our part, too, from time to time, we gave the Yugoslav leadership comradely information about the state of the war and its prospects in our country, about the manoeuvres of the occupiers and reaction, and about the victories achieved. Miladin Popović from time to time sent the Yugoslav leadership some information on his own behalf about the development of the war and the situation in our country.

In order to prove how absurd is the claim of the Yugoslav leadership about the aid which they allege to have given us during the period up till the end of 1943, I want to mention one more fact: the letter of J.B. Tito addressed to Miladin Popović on October 9, 1943 for the CC of the CPA. Whichever way you look at it, this letter, too, which is in the archives of our Party, cannot have any description from our side other than that which we gave Tito's first letter, which reached us in December 1942 and which I mentioned earlier.

With his own mouth, or more precisely with his own hand, Tito proved that at the end of 1943, just as at the end of 1942, he had not the slightest idea about the situation of our Party and our National Liberation War. After asking whether it were true that «the leader of the partisan army of Albania is a former prefect of police»!!! (apparently he had learned that from Radio London!), Tito began his «instructions». In October 1943 he told us that if the partisan ranks in Albania had increased, we should go over to bigger formations, brigades!

We could only smile in pity, because we had taken the decision to go over to big formations in March 1943 at the 1st National Conference; in June we had issued the instruction for the formation of the 1st Shock Brigade, while in October, when Tito gave us his «instructions», we had already created the 1st and 3rd Brigades and were continuing to work for the formation of other partisan brigades.

Tito made himself even more ridiculous with the «advice» he gave us on the question of the future state power of Albania. «I advise you,» he said «that the setting up of the people's state power should begin in Albania, too..., with the people's liberation councils as its basis...», and, after describing to us the «specific difficulties» in regard to this problem in Yugoslavia, he continued: «Amongst you, in your country, you can immediately set up a people's government which should be based, as I said, on the people's liberation councils... If the situation in your country is not ripe for this, then create a people's national liberation council, which will carry out all the functions of the government until the time comes for such a government to be formed.»¹

Any one who does not know the reality of our country at that time or wants to distort this reality, as the Titoites have done and are still doing, might say: «There you have the clear directives which Tito has sent you! Why do you deny him his merits?» With the historical truth in front of us, we have the right to reply, as we have done: The Communist Party of Albania at no time received and did not wait to receive «directives» from Tito on the cardinal problems of its activity or any other kind! And if what he wrote to us on the problem of the state power is to be called directives, then we have no alternative but to describe them as «directives» that came too late, or, as the people say, «a day after the fair». Concretely: In the spring of 1942 the Communist Party of Albania had begun the work to set up the people's democratic state power with the creation of the first national liberation councils; at the end of that year the whole country had been filled with councils, while in September 1943, the 2nd National Liberation Conference at Labinot had declared them the only state power of the people in Albania. As for Tito's other «instruction», that we should set up «a people's national liberation council», it must be

¹ From Tito's letter addressed to Miladin Popović for the CC of the CPA, October 9, 1943. CAP.

said: In Albania, as early as September 1942, and not in October 1943, when it «occurred» to Tito, our Party had formed the National Liberation General Council! The Presidium of the General Council, which emerged from the Labinot Conference in September 1943, carried out a series of functions of the Democratic Government!

In short, Tito knew nothing about what was done in our country and issued «instructions» to us about things which we had already done very well for ourselves long before. Therefore, it is not our fault that we did not await Tito's «directives» and then act. On the contrary, had we remained waiting, had we stopped to see what Tito and his henchmen would «direct» us to do, the cause of the Party and the future of our people would have been lost! This would have been a great and unpardonable sin.

Thus, however much one racks his brains and memory, nothing could be found in favour of the «unlimited aid» which the Yugoslav «friends» claim they had given us in that period.

But perhaps they are referring to our old «friend», Dušan Mugoša, who for most of this period (up till May 1944) remained in Albania. If Tito and company base their pretended «aid» in this period on the «contribution» of Mugoša, then I must say a couple of words about the «contribution» of this Titoite, who appeared to be unimportant and crazy, but who was charged with sinister long-range missions.

As the man of the «terrain» which he was, from the spring of 1943 Dušan Mugoša «stuck to» the region of Vlora. He was especially in tune with Mehmet Shehu and, later, when we sent Liri Gega there as delegate of the CC, these three became like a tripod. They were known as people of deeds and action, as resolute and brave, but the three of them were also known for their arrogance and conceit, for their insatiable thirst to be seen and heard, even to the extent of committing terrorist acts for which they were continually criticized and warned orally and in writing. But I am referring to Mugoša. Exploiting his friendship with Mehmet Shehu and Liri Gega, Dušan got himself into meeting

after meeting, contact after contact, and half in Albanian, half in Serbian, tried «to convince» the Skënder Muços and Hysni Lepenicas to associate themselves with the line of the Front and with the war which the Communist Party of Albania led!

With his tactless and irrational interference, especially in a district like Vlora, Mugoša only damaged the work that we did.

How much work and effort the Party, especially Hysni Kapo, had to expend to put right what Dušan Mugoša, Liri Gega and Mehmet Shehu weaved by night and unravelled by day in the region of Vlora.

We began to receive signals, one after another, about their grave sectarian mistakes, and after we described their work as seriously harmful, we removed them from the Vlora district.

Of course, we were bound to act cautiously, as we did, to avoid leaving any grounds for dissatisfaction, especially in the «friend» Mugoša. In August 1943, we formed the 1st Shock Brigade and Dušan persistently demanded that we send him there.

«I'll be in permanent action,» said «the man of the terrain», «and with Mehmet Shehu I get along very well.»

And truly he did get along well with him.

In one of our meetings with Tempo we had had a fierce quarrel with him over what we should call our partisan brigades. He said, «You should call them proletarian brigades,» as in Yugoslavia. While Miladin, Spiro Moisiu and I insisted that they should be called «shock brigades», because in this way we left no room for misunderstanding even in terminology, did not go beyond the slogans of the National Liberation War, etc. Despite Tempo's insistence, we acted as we ourselves thought best. The only one of our people who liked the Yugoslav term was Mehmet Shehu. In front of us he was obliged to call the 1st Brigade, where we had appointed him commander, a «Shock Brigade», but in confidential conversations and letters to the Yugoslav «friends» he called it «a proletarian brigade». Indeed, in one of these letters which he sent to Mugoša, Mehmet Shehu expressed his «profound regret» that Dušan was leaving Albania «before

the completion of the placard which he had ordered with the inscription, 1st PROLETARIAN Brigade.»¹

Undoubtedly, this was part of the «contribution» of Dušan Mugoša who, in the absence of Tempo, applied the instructions and ideas of Tempo to introduce splits and differences in the opinions and stands of our comrades. However, the negative influence of Mugoša in the 1st Brigade was especially apparent in other aspects. The heroic deeds and exemplary fight which the valiant partisans of this brigade, under the leadership and inspiration of the Party and the General Staff, waged during the years of the National Liberation War, are well known. History has spoken and will continue to speak about these things. However, without in any way implicating the effective of the brigade, or the overwhelming majority of its cadres, it must be said that during those years, some arbitrary, harmful and sectarian acts, also, were carried out on the personal orders of Mehmet Shehu and the direct instigation and inspiration of Dušan Mugoša. Such, for example, was the case of the execution of a group of Ballists, who, captured after an armed clash with our forces, were shot in violation of the instruction of the Party, which in such cases called for dispassionate judgement on the basis of the crimes which each individual had committed. We sternly condemned this act immediately.² Both in the terrain and in the brigade, Mugoša brought us nothing but harm with his sectarianism. But this was not the end of the «contribution» of Dušan Mugoša. The black smoke of his

1 A copy of this letter and other letters, full of Mehmet Shehu's admiration for Dušan Mugoša, can be found in the CAP.

2 Among other things, in a letter that Comrade Enver Hoxha addressed to Mehmet Shehu on November 5, 1943, he wrote: «Executing them is an excess, a mistake and out of place, because, instead of bringing us any good, it harms us. We must bear in mind that the peasants who are in the çetas of the Balli Kombëtar are innocent, unclarified and victims... We must not antagonize the peasants, because they are the pillar of the Party, and behaving towards them like you did is sure to have repercussions among the peasant strata. We must in no way give the enemy an excuse to accuse us of what we are not». CAP.

work, as a secret agent, with some of the cadres of the 1st Brigade, or wherever he was successful, has appeared a number of times on the horizon of the Party, during the whole of its course, right up to the present day, whenever the Party has clashed with anti-party groups or individuals in the leadership.

Hence, for Tito and company, the «merits» of this sectarian, megalomaniac and careerist are very great. Dušan Mugoša roamed through the «terrain», not simply on account of his «personal enthusiasm», but because he had been charged to poke his nose in wherever he could gather information about our comrades and send it to the Yugoslav leadership. The plans and cadres were being prepared in secret for the attack on the leadership of our Party, for the distortion of our correct line and the complete subjugation of the Communist Party of Albania. Not accidentally, 4-5 months before Velimir Stojnić came to Albania, Dušan Mugoša was summoned to return urgently to Yugoslavia for «special» duties. We farewelled him in a way which he did not deserve (with honours and thanks), but he, too, «honoured us» as we did not deserve: he gave the Yugoslav leadership the facts it needed to arrive at the conclusion that they had to act swiftly, with a strong hand, against the CPA and our leadership. Otherwise, the card the Titoites held to get Albania into their clutches would become worthless.

A new period was beginning in our relations with the CPY. That is, the time was coming when the Yugoslav leadership would concentrate its attention on «assisting us» in those aspects which up till now it had neglected: in our internal problems. The time was coming when, after a lapse of a year, Tito's third emissary for the years of the National Liberation War was to be attached to our leadership. This was a colonel — Velimir Stojnić. One of the most grievous events with the most serious consequences for our Party and country, the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA, known in history as the «backstage plot of Berat» is linked from beginning to end with the name and mission of this special envoy of Tito.

II

THE BACKSTAGE PLOT OF BERAT

The «Stojnić mission» in Albania ■ Nijaz Dizdarević — the «éminence grise» of Nako Spiru ■ The Soviet Major Ivanov «is informed» about us through Stojnić ■ The establishment of our main leadership in liberated Berat ■ Nako Spiru, Koçi Xoxe, Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo are engaged in the Titoite plot. Liri Gega in the role of the «scapegoat» ■ Three steps of the «Stojnić mission»: first — the departure of Miladin Popović from Albania; second — the split of our Political Bureau; third — the split of the CC of the CPA and the condemnation of our main leadership ■ The seeds of disruption and self-exposure are growing behind the «unity» of the plotters ■ V. Stojnić's discussion — the Titoite platform for the subjugation of the CPA and the gobbling up of Albania ■ Tito, the intermediary of the British ■ The people's revolts in Kosova ■ Stojnić serves up the idea of the «Balkan Federation» headed by Yugoslavia ■ The bitter fruits of the Berat Plenum.

The period from August 1943, when Vukmanović-Tempo departed, until August 1944, when Velimir Stojnić arrived, is one of the stormiest and most brilliant periods in the history of our Party and the National Liberation War in Albania. During this time our Communist Party further

increased and tempered its ranks, worked out and consistently followed a clear and correct Marxist-Leninist line in all the fields and, as a result, great victories were achieved.

The strengthening and consolidation of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, the organization and strengthening of national liberation councils in villages and cities constitute further evidence of the colossal work and struggle which our Party carried out in that period. The 2nd National Liberation Conference held in Labinot of Elbasan in September 1943 and its very important decisions¹ set the course for all the great and far-sighted work of the Party for the creation of the new state of people's democracy in Albania. The crowning of this work was the organization and holding of the historic Congress of Përmet with complete success in May 1944, a congress which finally accomplished one of the strategic tasks of the Party — the creation of the new Albanian state of people's democracy.

During this period, in ceaseless clashes with the occupier and the local traitors, the Albanian National Liberation Army rapidly increased its ranks, was armed and tempered in battle, and affirmed itself as an army of the new type. Apart from other things, it successfully withstood one of the heaviest blows of the enemy — the great nazi Winter Operation of 1943-1944, and in the spring of 1944, on the orders of the General Staff it seized the initiative and launched a counter-offensive. After the creation of a considerable number

1 This conference dealt with the strengthening of the democratic people's power as a fundamental question. It approved the Constitution and the rules of the national liberation councils, elected the new National Liberation General Council, publicly denounced the compromise the representatives of the General Council, Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi (secret agent of the British Intelligence Service — see: Enver Hoxha, «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania», Tirana 1982, pp. 173-224, Eng. ed.) had reached with the representatives of the Balli Kombëtar in Mukje, Kruja district, in opposition to the instructions they had received, and decided on the thorough exposure of the hostile activity of the Balli Kombëtar.

of brigades and other units, which in May 1944 included more than 35 000 fighters in their ranks, apart from the territorial getas and the armed volunteers in the villages, we went on to the formation of the 1st Shock Division and, a little later, of the 2nd Shock Division of the ANLA. At the end of May 1944 as Commander-in-Chief, I issued the order to the National Liberation Army to launch a general offensive for the complete liberation of Albania from the German occupiers and for the total destruction of the Balli Kombëtar and the Legaliteti and all the other forces of reaction. The flames of the decisive battle swept Albania from south to north. Everything was going well, both on the external front against the Hitlerite forces and on the internal front. The decisive victory was not far off.

Precisely at this period, the efforts and attempts of the Anglo-American allies to interfere savagely in our internal affairs¹, to prevent Albania slipping from their fingers were intensified as never before. However, we defeated these plans of the allies in time. In the future, too, we were to display unrelenting vigilance and care to neutralize the Anglo-American threat. We were to have struggles and battles with them, but in the final analysis, their cause in Albania was lost.

Precisely at these moments when the storm of the war and the revolution in Albania had reached its climax, Tito's emissary Colonel Velimir Stojnić and his aide Nijaz Dizdarević² arrived at our General Staff. Their arrival marked the beginning of one of the most difficult and delicate periods of our wartime and post-war history — the period of open and secret clashes and conflicts with the Belgrade leadership.

1 See Enver Hoxha, «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania», Tirana 1982, pp. 334-352, Eng. ed.

2 Where this Velimir Stojnić has ended up today we do not know, and we have never heard his name again after the notorious activity he carried on in Albania, while Nijaz Dizdarević, after being a bow-tied diplomat in Paris, later an ambassador with a string of tranquillity beads in Algeria, was lately chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission in the Yugoslav Federal Skupština. (Author's note.)

Thus, for several years on end, the CPA and the Albanian people were to be involved in a new, peculiar war, without artillery and machine-guns, but just as difficult, if not more so, and with more dangerous consequences than the war with weapons against the open enemies.

The «Stojnić mission»

Velimir Stojnić came to Albania in the end of August 1944 as chief of the Yugoslav military mission attached to our General Staff.

«The task of our mission,» he told us at the first meeting in Helmës, «is, first, to transmit in a fraternal way to your General Staff the experience of the Yugoslav Staff in connection with big combined operations now that the German troops are withdrawing from Greece; second, to establish regular liaison between the general staffs and armies of our two countries, to examine the possibilities to co-ordinate our actions in large-scale joint operations in the future, and third, to assist in the further organization of the sister army of Albania.»

Very quickly, however, from the first conversation with this colonel and his main aide Nijaz Dizdarević, we were to become convinced that their mission was military only in name, in its label and method of operation. Indeed, at the first meeting Stojnić himself told us that he had come also as «instructor of the CC of the CPY» attached to our leadership, but we did not accept him in this capacity and he quite openly expressed his annoyance. The truth is that he came for other «duties». Some of them, those most obvious and which, with the level of our knowledge at those moments, we could recognize most readily, we were to understand at that time. The others were to become clear later, when we went back again and again over all those things which

occurred from the moment the Stojnić team arrived in Albania.

Time was to prove that, above all, the «Stojnić mission» was a special mission which was sent by Tito to Albania at the end of the war for sinister political aims, for sabotage and espionage. It came to organize the attack on the CPA and its line, to subjugate the CPA, to turn it into a tool and appendage of the CPY. It came precisely on the eve of the complete liberation of Albania in order to attack the foundations on which the new people's state power was being erected, and to prepare the terrain for turning Albania into the 7th Republic of Yugoslavia.

On account of the special relations we had created with the CPY, we welcomed the new emissary of the Yugoslav leadership warmly and whole-heartedly. He told us about the situation in Yugoslavia, the partisan war and the successes achieved under the leadership of the CPY and Tito. And we, too, at the first meeting, told him in a comradely way about the situation and successes of our army, about the Front and the new people's state power which was being set up.

«Some other day,» he said, «I can also tell you about the organization and experience of our Communist Party.»

«We shall be very pleased to hear these things,» I said. «Ours is a young party and we need to know the experience of older and bigger parties and to exchange opinions.»

So, at another meeting, Velimir Stojnić talked to us about the CPY, about its past, as well as about the war and the correct development which it assumed once Josip Broz Tito came to the leadership, and the great authority which the party had won among the people through the heroic war towards victory it was waging under his leadership.

On this occasion, I, too, spoke about the history of our Party from its founding, about how it had extended and the successes it had achieved, etc., etc. As soon as I finished, the colonel threw off his «military» role and said:

«In fact, my main mission is military, but as a party cadre and on the special instruction of the leadership of our

party, I shall also talk about party matters and everything else,» and assuming a very serious air, he began to make «criticisms» of us over our line and to list the «mistakes» which our Party had allegedly committed «continually»!

One of the «main» criticisms which Velimir Stojnić had brought was the allegation that the line of our Party had «continually» vacillated from right to left, and he did not fail to link the «opportunism» of our line with the criticisms of Vukmanović-Tempo. In fact, Tempo had advocated fratricidal war, had advised us to attack the newly emerged Balli Kombëtar and had criticized the efforts of our Party to win misled elements away from the Balli Kombëtar. For his part, Velimir Stojnić accused us of opportunism in our line and «proved» this with the fact that representatives of the General Council of the National Liberation Front held talks with representatives of the Balli Kombëtar in the Mukje village near Kruja at the end of July and the beginning of August 1943. At the same time, while describing Mukje as an «opportunist act», using the same «argument», he reproached us for being sectarian, because we had not continued the talks with these collaborators with Italian fascism and traitors to our people.

After listening quietly to this person (whom at that time we considered at least ill-informed about our line), I said to him:

«Not only are you in contradiction with yourself and with Tempo, but you force me to the conclusion that you don't know the situation in our country. You have to understand that the Balli Kombëtar is the front of betrayal, its chiefs are collaborators with the Italian fascists. From the moment that the Balli Kombëtar was formed our Party appealed to its members to unite against the occupiers. This was not opportunism in our line, but a correct application of the line. The Balli Kombëtar fought us and collaborated with the Italian occupiers. On the eve of the capitulation of Italy new situations were being created in our war, and we had to take advantage of them. To this end, we appealed

once again to the members of the Balli Kombëtar to join in the war, both against the Italian occupiers who were on the verge of capitulation, and against the new German occupiers. The chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar responded to our call to hold talks and to decide what should be done later. We had our objectives and they had theirs. They came to the talks with us to gain a little credit after the great discredit they had suffered among the people, while, as I said, we set out with the aim of drawing the Balli Kombëtar into the war against the new occupiers, the savage German nazis. If the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar were to continue to play their old game this time, too, then they would be more thoroughly and finally exposed in the eyes of the people and would be abandoned by the misled elements who comprised the base of that organization. That is why the Mukje Meeting was held. The delegates of our National Liberation Front had been clearly instructed that they were going to Mukje to tell the Balli Kombëtar to join in the war and that beyond this no compromise could be made with them. The chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar had their own plans at Mukje. They not only wanted to create a joint committee, but also wanted parity in the leadership of the Albania of the future. Those who demanded this were those who had collaborated openly with fascist Italy, and they demanded this at a time when they gave no guarantee that they would fight against the Germans and when, amongst other things, they wanted us to accept the thesis of «greater Albania» and «ethnic Albania». And the two delegates of our Party fell for the Balli Kombëtar's trap and accepted its demands, because one of them, Mustafa Gjinishi, as it is emerging, was an agent of the British Intelligence Service, and the other, Ymer Dishnica, was an opportunist. Immediately the Party learned of this betrayal by its delegates, it denounced it. Therefore, Comrade Velimir, I tell you that your criticisms of our Party and its leadership either of opportunism or of sectarianism are without foundation.»

«I insist that your condemnation of Mukje was sectarian-

ism,» repeated Velimir. «You should have found the language to persuade the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar.»

«Never! That would have been betrayal, betrayal of the Party,» replied Miladin very angrily. «Had we done that the Albanian people ought to have lined us up against the wall and shot us. Why did this people and this Party fight? To share power with reaction?»

The debate flared up and went on for a long time. Velimir, Miladin and I did most of the speaking. Koçi Xoxe sat completely silent, but according to the argument, sometimes went red and sometimes pale, while Nako Spiru had no «chance» to engage in the debate: his knowledge of Italian had tied him up with number 2 in the «Stojnić mission», with the clever and cunning Yugoslav Nijaz Dizdarević, to whom he translated what we said.

«I do not say you should share power,» Stojnić replied indignantly to Miladin Popović. «You ought to have taken part in the meetings envisaged at Mukje, this is what I want to say. Don't try to conceal your sectarianism. It is blatant!»

«In what do you see it?» I asked him.

«In what I said about the way you acted with regard to Mukje. But I have other facts, too. Liri Gega and Mehmet Shehu have made your sectarianism obvious. By what name shall we call what they are doing?»

«They have their own faults and we have criticized them for these things and we shall look into them more deeply. But don't forget that their close collaborator, indeed, their inspirer in all their distortions and sectarian acts, has been your comrade. Dušan Mugoša.»

«Leave Mugoša out of this,» interrupted Stojnić, «he belongs to us and we shall look into his work. I am referring to your comrades. In Vlora Liri Gega appoints and removes whoever she likes in the regional committee and the command. At Peqin Mehmet Shehu kills 50-60 ballists from the villages of Lushnja, in the North Liri is brandishing a naked sword.»

«You seem to be well-acquainted with our situation!» I said with obvious sarcasm.

«I believe I am! Indeed, I know it very well!» replied Velimir Stojnić arrogantly.

«Comrade colonel!» I put in in a stern tone there and then. «We are friends and comrades, we respect and honour your party and fraternal people, but excuse me, it seems to me you are going beyond your military authority, either as a delegate of the Yugoslav General Staff or as a member of another party. Your interference in our affairs is out of place and your tone is unacceptable.»

«We are communists, first of all,» he said backing down a little. «There is nothing wrong with our talking about these questions. I told you that I have special instructions from Comrade Tito to talk with you about these matters, too.»

«All right,» I said, «we can talk as communists, but bear in mind where you are speaking and why.»

«I beg your pardon,» he replied, blushing. «Perhaps I used some ill-considered expression, but you must understand, I say everything in a comradely way, for your benefit, because we are friends. I have no other aim. But let us leave this for today, we'll talk about it more calmly another time.»

We parted coldly although we smiled and shook hands. However, I could not get what had occurred out of my mind, especially the unexpected accusation of «sectarianism». A year earlier we had made efforts to win the nationalist elements and anyone else to the course of the war against the occupier and for this Tempo accused us of «opportunism», while now, when we had put the Balli Kombëtar firmly in its place, it emerges that we had fallen into «sectarianism». This was intolerable and I said to Miladin:

«I don't understand this. Do these delegates want to help us or do they want 'to catch' us, or saddle us with a 'mistake' at all costs...?!»

Miladin forced a smile, slapped me on the shoulder and said nothing. It was a smile which I had rarely seen on the face of my comrade-in-arms and in hardships. In that smile there was despair, regret, and perhaps also suspicion about what the comrades of his Party were pouring out.

«Let us fight, let us fight and forge ahead,» he said, «and these matters will be cleared up. After all, Tempo and Velo [Velimir Stojnić] and the devil knows who else are neither the CPY, nor the CC of the CPY.»

«I wouldn't want to put that in doubt,» I said.

Those were days full of work, tension and most difficult and varied problems which demanded correct and urgent solutions. During those days and nights, the comrades and I devoted a great part of our time and strength to preparing the strategic and operational plans for the battles which the divisions and other big and small units of our army were waging, or that we planned for them to wage in the general offensive which had been launched. The major problems in the life of the Party, in the army and amongst the civilian population, the problems of the Front and the national liberation councils demanded time and effort from us. Moreover, at the Congress of Përmet we had formed the Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee which performed the functions of the Democratic Government, and the most important thing was that this government was not just a creation on paper or a group of people who had to sit waiting for the day when they would take power.

No, we were a government in action, a government which had power over most of Albania and from day to day this power was being extended to the towns, villages and regions which were liberated. On some other occasion I shall relate in detail what an endless field of complex problems was this of the creation, organization and running of the state and what efforts, work, studies and debates we had to carry out. I want to stress only that the situation, the phase which our war had reached, and a series of other circumstances compelled us to think of and be responsible for everything — from the major problems of the final battle for liberation, from ensuring food and shelter for the population of the liberated zones, and indeed, even unliberated zones, from the organization of the first work of construction to the taking of preliminary measures for the phase when the Party and the people

would have the whole of Albania free and democratic. In our way, we had the Anglo-American allies, who, like experienced political gamblers, played new cards day after day to lead us up a blind alley, and around us we had internal reaction which saw that it was losing its case and tried to create a thousand obstacles and difficulties for us. Add to this the lack of experience of nearly all of us in the problems of the organization and running of a new state, add the marked lack of cadres, and the picture becomes more or less clear. And precisely in the midst of all this work, with its endless series of difficulties and cardinal, great and little problems, the «Stojnić mission» is sent amongst us with its predetermined objectives and aims.

In the first days of September we had gone down to Odriçan (Helmës with its few houses could not shelter all of us), and from there through many ceaseless contacts we led the whole country. The telephone never stopped ringing, radio messages came from all directions, the coming and going of couriers and comrades was uninterrupted. Sometimes, Velimir Stojnić came, too, for a «consultation», for «assistance» or simply to say *dobar dan*.^{*} He tried to learn everything and poked his nose everywhere. At one moment, when I was exchanging a couple of words with him in passing, the signals officer came to me and said:

«Comrade Commander! They report from Gjirokastra that they are going to blow up the Dragot Bridge. German convoys are approaching from the Drino and the Vjosa gorges, and the Dragot Bridge is a key point. They want your opinion.»

«In no way!» I told him. «Transmit the order immediately not to blow up the Dragot Bridge, but to defend it at all costs.»

«Where is this bridge?» asked Velimir Stojnić all interest immediately.

I went up to the map and pointed it out to him.

«Why shouldn't it be blown up?!» he exploded as if a

^{*} good morning (Serb. in the original).

wasp had stung him. «It's an extremely strategic bridge. If the German columns cross it that will open up a lot of trouble for you and also for us. Let the Germans be cut up and wiped out on the other side, otherwise they'll penetrate all through Albania and even into Yugoslavia.»

«Don't worry,» I told him, «our order is that between Kakavia and Hani i Hotit¹ no German is to be left alive. And if some are left we shall pursue them, hot foot, over our borders.»

«Then, why not destroy this bridge?!» he asked again. «Blowing it up would greatly hinder their penetration...»

«Because the time has come when we need the bridges. A good many of them have been and are being blown up by the Germans and the officers of the British missions are astoundingly zealous about blowing up many others. But now that our military forces have all our roads and gorges and mountains under control, to blow up the bridges means to blow up the property of the people in power. You don't realize that the Dragot Bridge is a strategic point for our operations. As to stopping the enemy columns, I must tell you that the Këlcyra Gorge is near the bridge and our forces have made it impassable for the Germans.»

The chief of the Yugoslav military mission went away displeased. As I said, in fact military problems were not his main mission. But in this aspect, too, those who had sent him had charged him with tasks. One of these was to «influence» us so that during this period we would engage the maximum number of German units which were deployed in Albania, or those withdrawing from Greece, in battle on our territory, and hence, not permit the penetration of nazi forces into Yugoslavia. As we heard later, on the orders of the Yugoslav General Staff, they had formed a strong defensive curtain on the borders between Greece and Macedonia,

¹ Respectively the south-easternmost and north-westernmost extension of the border of Albania.

with the aim of preventing the withdrawal of the Germans in that strategic direction. Thus, Albania remained the only «door» for their withdrawal. Hence, through this «division of doors» the mortally wounded nazi beast was to pour its final ferocity on our territories and forces.

Naturally, it had never crossed our minds that such a division of roles could be made during the war. We had always fought with all our might and possibilities to kill every nazi wherever we found him, without ever considering that we could make an «advantageous tactical withdrawal» into some safe spot in order to leave the enemy to be wiped out by somebody else. All the battles we had waged up till August 1944 had proved this; it was proved to the best, also, by the heroic and uninterrupted fighting of our forces from August to November 1944 and, after the liberation of Albania, by the fact that a good part of these forces continued the hot pursuit of the nazis beyond our state borders into Yugoslavia. In short, for this part of his mission Velimir Stojnić had to exert no effort. He was left free to concentrate on other, more important aspects. And as I said, he began this work as soon as he set foot in Albania.

How did Velimir Stojnić and his associates begin their work? They divided their roles. Velimir posed as «competent» on the organization of the army, the party, the state, the security service, education, culture, etc. In a word, he was «a great brain» and it was «a great favour» that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia did our Party by sending such a man to give us «experience».

For his part, Nijaz Dizdarević was a real fox: clever, but evil and a dyed-in-the-wool intriguer. The things he knew, he knew thoroughly and expressed well. He had been charged to work with our youth and to organize them in resistance against the Party, if it opposed the implementation of the diabolical plans of the Yugoslavs. Nijaz Dizdarević not only became the *éminence grise** of Nako Spiru, but

* (French in the original).

he also played on people's «heart strings» in the interests of the Yugoslav UDB. During the plot, he «fell in love» with a member of the plenum of the Central Committee of our Party, promised to marry her and, when he had gathered all the information he needed, cleared off and left her.

A few days before the arrival of the «Stojnić mission», a Soviet major, Ivanov, had also come to Helmës. As can be imagined, we welcomed him with open arms and with all the honours befitting the representative of the glorious army of Stalin. But it was regrettable that Major Ivanov should represent such an army as the Red Army. He was a clever, cunning type, and as became apparent later, he, too, had come on a military mission, as well as on other «special» missions. I well remember how he sat the whole day near the stairs waiting for Colonel Stojnić, and the fact is that Ivanov was «informed» about Albania and us, its fighters, in the light in which Stojnić described us. Regrettably the Soviet Union was being informed about Albania through the eyes of Stojnić, and not only on the eve of liberation, but also for several years afterwards the Soviets were «acquainted» with us through the tales that Tito, Kardelj, Djilas and others concocted. At every opportunity Major Ivanov continually boosted Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević to «convince» us that «the two Yugoslav comrades have capacity». In reality, however, Velimir Stojnić was a young ass, a very ordinary person, who had learned a few formulas by rote and could speak only about them, apart from the instructions which they had given him and which he would draw from his briefcase and quote time after time.

The first arguments they had with us, especially the clear-cut objections which Miladin and I raised, completely convinced Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević that they must set to work at once to bring about radical changes. Velimir Stojnić worked persistently to build up a tense situation. He communicated every day by radio with Tito's

staff, especially with its organizational secretary—Ranković, wherefrom he received instructions about how he should act.

When he saw that Miladin, as a Yugoslav, did not support them in the criticisms they made, but, on the contrary, opposed them, he sought to remove him from the scene and to isolate me from the comrades in order to attack me more easily. And this is what he did. We were still at Odriçan when he managed to get rid of Miladin. He passed on to him Tito's order that «Miladin should return as quickly as possible to Yugoslavia and present himself to report». The villainy of the Velimir Stojnić group went so far that they did not inform me even «in a comradely way» about this decision which was taken about a comrade who had worked three or four years with us and had fought together with us. They had instructed Miladin that, when he talked with me about his departure, he must not tell me that they had summoned him to report, but simply that «they were sending him to work on another task in Yugoslavia.»

At first, to avoid upsetting me, he did not tell me the truth.

«But why precisely at these moments?!» I asked him. «Just a few more weeks and Albania will be liberated. Let us enter Tirana together once more, not illegally, with bombs and pistols in our pockets, as in 1941 and 1942, but freely, as victors, then you can go. I'll gather the people and say to them: 'You see this chap. He is a Montenegrin, a Yugoslav. But he is ours, he's an Albanian, too. His name is Miladin Popović, we call him Ali Gostivari. He is our comrade, our brother, a communist who for four years on end, together with us and with you, fought and made sacrifices, grew up with us, and gave everything he had for this victory, for freedom. Now he is going away. All of you should kiss him and wish him good-bye!'» As I said this Ali Gostivari wept.

«Listen,» I said, «you have to stay a few more weeks to see freedom!»

«I want to so badly, Enver, but... I have to go. This is the order from my centre.»

I sensed that he was hiding something from me. I met Stojnić and asked him in the name of our leadership to intervene with his leadership to postpone the order.

«That cannot be done,» said Velimir Stojnić, cold and inexorable. «Comrade Tito issues an order only once.»

«Very well,» I said, «but how, by what route, is he to go to Yugoslavia?»

«Over the mountains,» he replied. «We are still at war.»

«No,» I said, «we shall not allow this. In 1942 and 1943, when we were illegal, we picked up Blažo and Tempo and sent them on their way by car, when they were fit and well, and we cannot fail to do the same thing for Miladin now that we are almost liberated. You know that he is ill with tuberculosis.»

«But what can we do?» he asked, and added, «I know only this: he must leave as quickly as possible for Yugoslavia.»

A plan came to my mind and I sought an urgent meeting with one of the officers of the British Mission. It was the time when the British wanted to be on «good terms» with us, so that we would approve their repeated «variants» of a landing¹. At that time we had also reached an agreement with them for a number of seriously wounded partisans to be treated in the allied hospitals in Bari of Italy. The British officer presented himself in the room where I worked.

«Mister officer,» I said, «I want to ask a confidential favour from you.»

He forgot he was a military man and bowed from «satisfaction» that I was giving him the opportunity to do me such a favour.

«A partisan, a close friend of mine, is very ill. Could you use your possibilities to transport him as quickly as possible to Bari?!»

«Of course, tomorrow evening!» replied the British

¹ See footnote 1, p. 131 of this book.

officer very «readily» and continued, «you have given me the opportunity, General, to tell you that I want to discuss something with you.»

I had taken into account that I would have to pay «the reckoning».

«The day after tomorrow, in the morning,» I agreed there and then.

«All right!» the British officer clicked his heels together and left.

I met Miladin and Stojnić and said to the latter:

«Tomorrow evening we are going to send Miladin to Bari under his Albanian name Ali Gostivari. Get in touch with your staff so that they take measures for the Yugoslav representatives attached to the Allied Command in Italy to meet him. From there I believe room will be found for Miladin Popović in one of the ships or aircraft which link your staff with the Allied Command every day.»

Velimir Stojnić's face darkened with anger that this matter had been settled so neatly, but he had no way to oppose it. We parted.

Before he left, Miladin was strolling thoughtfully. I caught up with him and when we were approaching the church square in Odriçan he put his arm round my shoulders and said to me:

«Enver, I didn't tell you yesterday because I didn't want to add to your distress, but you ought to know. I'm going because I'm forced to do so in Tito's name. They're not pleased with my work. But I tell you one thing: this Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević are behaving like enemies. Watch out for them! I only hope that I reach Yugoslavia alive and I'm able to meet Tito, because I'm not going to keep quiet and let them go undenounced.»

So they removed Miladin.

Immediately after we farewelled him, I summoned Velimir Stojnić to my office, and asked him the reason for Miladin's departure. He said coldly:

«It was an order from Tito that he should return to Yugoslavia.»

«I trust,» I said, «that Tito has not ordered that this decision about a comrade who worked in these difficult years together with our Party should not be communicated to me.»

«Has Miladin informed you about this?» he asked.

«He informed me, but it was up to you to do such a thing,» I said coldly and asked: «Why was Miladin summoned to Yugoslavia?»

«To render account,» he replied in an arrogant tone.

«I don't object to his going or to his rendering account about his work to the CC of the CPY,» I said, «but I should have been informed. If it is simply a question of 'rendering account',» I continued, «Miladin ought first to render account to our Party, where he worked. And I tell you that he worked very well, as an internationalist communist, while you have not acted correctly. This is my view.»

«You stick to your view and we shall stick to ours,» said Velimir Stojnić and we parted, shaking hands coldly.

After this the second step of the «Stojnić mission» began. I was left as the focal point of the attack. Of course, I did not know and those days I did not even realize what was being prepared and hatched up around me, but I could not fail to be aware of the cold atmosphere that was being created.

In the last days of our stay at Odrіčan, Velimir Stojnić came to my office and said to me in a serious tone:

«Comrade General Secretary...»

I understood that he had come on «party matters» because he had adopted certain «special» rules of protocol in his relations with us: when he came on military matters he began with «Comrade Commander», when he came on «state matters» he began with «Comrade Chairman», when he came on party affairs he began with «Comrade General Secretary».

«Recently we have had a number of discussions but have

not carried them through to the finish. I think that we ought to go into them thoroughly," he said.

"When the opportunity and possibilities present themselves," I replied. "You realize how busy we are."

"I see that," he said, "but I consider this necessary. These questions are important for your line, for all your work."

"Very well," I said. "As soon as I find the opportunity I shall inform you."

"No, no. I think we should go into them extensively in the Bureau of your Central Committee. Indeed, I find it regrettable that up till now you have not summoned the Bureau to hear me officially."

"The Bureau, Comrade Stojnić," I told him, "meets according to the plan of work it has, according to the problems and conditions which present themselves to us. But I tell you sincerely I have not considered and do not consider it reasonable to summon the Bureau over those matters which you raise."

"This ought to have been done long ago," he said in a stern and offended tone. "As far as I know you are soon to hold a meeting of the Bureau. The comrades have been assembled and indeed I was introduced to Liri Gega who had just arrived from the North."

"It is quite true that we have a meeting of the Bureau," I said, "but it is a meeting of the Bureau of the Central Committee of our Party and I tell you frankly that your request to take part in it is out of place and unacceptable."

"Do you mean to say that you are still against my taking part in it?"

"You should not even make such requests, which are contrary to the norms of an independent party, irrespective of our fraternal relations."

As he stared at me for quite a pause, without speaking, I saw an expression of internal anger and a cynical smile. Then he muttered something and stalked out. What this smile implied I understood as soon as we had begun the meeting of our Political Bureau. We had decided that at this

meeting we would analyse the more urgent problems of the situation, decide on the work plan of the Bureau for the period up till the liberation of Albania, and the main item, I was to present the main theses of the report which we were to make to the coming plenum of the CC of the Party. Those present at the meeting were Koçi Xoxe, Nako Spiru, Ramadan Çitaku, Liri Gega and I (two other former members of the Bureau, Ymer Dishnica and Gjin Marku, elected at the 1st National Conference in March 1943, had been expelled from the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the Party some time earlier: Ymer Dishnica for the betrayal he had committed at Mukje with the Balli Kombëtar in August 1943, and Gjin Marku for his almost complete failure to take part in the meetings of the Political Bureau as well as for his notorious compromise with the Germans in Berat in the autumn of 1943).¹

As soon as we began the meeting of the Political Bureau, Koçi Xoxe got up and said:

«I propose we should invite the delegate of the Yugoslav leadership, Comrade Stojnić, to take part in this meeting.»

Ramadan Çitaku and I, and at first Liri Gega, too, totally opposed this. Nako Spiru was in solidarity with Koçi Xoxe. The meeting of the Bureau about the most important current and future problems suddenly became a battle of words:

«He is chief of the military mission,» said Ramadan Çitaku, «why should he come to the Bureau?»

«He is the representative of a sister army and a sister party!» put in Koçi Xoxe.

«Then let us call Ivanov, too,» I replied. «Indeed, accord-

¹ In September-October 1943, Gjin Marku, commander of the partisan forces of the Berat region, without notifying the General Staff and contravening the line of the CPA, allowed the German forces to enter freely into Berat which was already liberated by the forces of the National Liberation Army. This act without precedent in Albania was condemned by the Party as a very serious fault.

ing to this logic,» I added sarcastically, «we should even invite the Englishman as an observer, he is our ally...»

Tempers blazed and this was completely unexpected and astonishing to me. Never before had such a scene occurred. Since we were failing to agree, it was proposed to put the matter to the vote. Unexpectedly Liri Gega raised her hand together with Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru. Ramadan Çitaku and I were left in the minority.

In this way Velimir Stojnić was given the right to take part, discuss and dictate his will in our Political Bureau.

From these moments begins one of the most unpleasant and gravest processes in the life of our Party, the process of the splitting of our Political Bureau, of «reorganizations» of it and «co-options» to it, and later, of upsetting the whole Central Committee elected in Labinot in March 1943.

To achieve these results Velimir Stojnić had to work carefully, according to a well thought-out plan. As I said, as soon as he arrived in Albania, he began to apply his plan, but it was only in that meeting of the Political Bureau that for the first time I felt that something serious was going on when the place of the «honoured guest» was given to Velimir by vote. Immediately after I ended my main contribution, in which I put before the comrades the theses of the report which I was to prepare for the 2nd Plenum of the CC, Stojnić with a certain «politeness» sought the right to speak. In a few words he thanked us for the «honour» which we did him and the «trust» which our Bureau expressed in him by inviting him to this meeting and immediately opened his briefcase:

«From what the Comrade General Secretary said, I realize that this is a very important meeting. By coincidence (!) the things I want to say to you in a fraternal way are completely in conformity with the theme of this meeting, which is to discuss the problems you are going to put before the plenum of your Central Committee.»

Everything he said in the course of a good two hours (apart from the time required for the translation) consisted in essence of theses which completely overturned all that I had

presented in my opening contribution. In other words, his theses were a complete overturning of the line followed and victories achieved by our Party and at the same time, if they were accepted, were a completely distorted platform for the future. In essence they comprised:

First, a euphoric propaganda of «the majestic successes» of the CPY and Tito. He praised Tito to the skies, almost putting him on the same footing as Stalin, and openly implying that «the Albanians and the Bulgarians are triumphing in the war» thanks to the great aid of the Yugoslavs.

Immediately after eulogizing Tito, the CPY and their «brilliant», «creative» line, etc., Stojnić repeated bluntly and brutally all those things that we had learnt by heart: «You have not had a clear line», «you have suffered from sectarianism, opportunism and sectarianism again».

With these theses Velimir Stojnić aimed to attack the line of our Party throughout the period of the war and to present it as «unstable, unclear and, especially, sectarian».

Second, although the meeting was dedicated to the results of our war, Stojnić passed over this with the odd phrase, indeed in a disdainful tone, and poured out praise solely for the «experience», «example» and «outstanding and great contribution» of the Yugoslav army.

With such boastful propaganda about their war, Velimir Stojnić aimed to create the impression that our National Liberation War «was nothing very much» and «was not of any great weight in comparison with the war of the peoples of Yugoslavia». With this he openly implied that we were indebted to the Yugoslav war for our liberation, and he worked in this direction to create the view that «our war was simply a war of çetas», or even worse, «a war of terrorists and assassins». Hence, he pulled out of his briefcase the old hostile theses of Vukmanović-Tempo with whom I had always been in open opposition and dispute.

Third, the line of the Party in connection with the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, according to Velimir, was also a wrong line, a «sectarian» line. He went so far as

to make the accusation in the meeting, «You have not taken a correct stand towards 'patriotic' chiefs» (such as Cen Elezi,¹ whom we had not admitted to the Front), and he also repeated what he had pronounced on the first day of his arrival, «You were wrong not to continue the talks» with the Ballists at Mukje. Along with this, according to him and those who sent him, we ought to rehabilitate Ymer Dishnica.

Fourth, the organizational line of the Party and the policy of cadres, still according to them, turned out to be «wrong», «carried out on a personal plane», because allegedly we had «removed devoted comrades from leading functions», etc., etc.

As a conclusion, the successes of the CPA were «petty», «partial» and «if the CPA emerged triumphant, this was mostly thanks to Yugoslavia, the CPY and Tito». So much for the past. Now what had to be done? These things, according to Stojnić, must be «put in order» and to put them in order properly there was no alternative for us Albanian communists but to «follow the Yugoslav road, the advice and instructions of Tito», which Velimir Stojnić had brought. The basic idea was this: «He who is on this road is a true communist, the others must be got rid of.»

Summed up very briefly, these were the main primary accusations of Velimir Stojnić and the secret aims which he wanted to achieve by means of them precisely now, on the eve of the complete liberation of Albania, when we were emerging triumphant over the nazi-fascist occupiers, the local traitors and internal reaction.

1 Element from the gentry of Dibra, opponent of the Party and the National Liberation Front. In the autumn of 1944, through the intervention of Velimir Stojnić on behalf of this old agent of the kraljs of Serbia, under the pretext that he «had not been so active as the other reactionary chiefs against the National Liberation Movement», Cen Elezi was admitted to the ranks of the National Liberation Front. After the establishment of the people's state power, Cen Elezi was to put his activity at the service of the reactionary policy of the Anglo-Americans and the remnants of reaction in Albania.

I cannot claim that I realized immediately, at this meeting, the extent and depth of the secret aims of the hostile work which Tito's emissaries were organizing against our Party and young state. No, the truth was to emerge clearly later, but I must say that from those moments I was more than conscious of one thing: unjust and unwarranted criticisms and accusations were being made against us.

I awaited the reaction of the comrades, but they had hung their heads and were «waiting». I thought that they must have been dismayed at the way in which Stojnić cancelled out all our work, but since he was our «honoured guest» they did not want to oppose him openly at the first meeting. But we were communists and there was no reason for us or the guest to take offence at the truth.

I took the floor again (although it was not up to me alone to speak again), and after thanking Stojnić for their «interest» and «concern», etc., I began to go over briefly and refute everything that was incorrect in his «criticisms» and accusations about our line and situation.

«Please don't misunderstand me,» I continued. «I don't agree with the 'criticism' which you have made here, not because comradely criticism or advice displeases us, but because the truth is completely different. The comrades will express their opinions and you will be convinced.»

«I hope you're right!» said Stojnić smiling enigmatically. «We shall hear what the comrades have to say.»

After a brief silence, that same unpleasant atmosphere which developed in the meeting when we discussed whether or not Stojnić should be admitted to the meeting of our Bureau, built up again.

«On many points the things which Comrade Colonel Velimir Stojnić mentioned here are contrary to those which Comrade Enver will deal with in the report to the plenum,» said Koçi Xoxe. «I say we should not be hasty. Let us reflect on them well and then talk about them.»

«Where are we going to find the time to reflect and then talk about them?» put in Liri Gega there and then, with

her well-known mania, not only to oppose Koçi Xoxe about the content of everything he said, but also to sneer at him openly over the peculiarities of the «pure Korça idiom» in which he spoke.

«If you had thought a bit, you would not have made all those sectarian bloomers,» retorted Koçi Xoxe. «We'll have a good look at your sectarianism in the Bureau.»

«Better sectarian than idling your time away,» Liri snapped back in her usual style, hitting Koçi on a tender spot.

I shall speak later about the Koçi-Liri «allergy» and the scenes which frequently took place between them, but here I want to point out that in the past such open quarrels had not occurred in the Bureau, even between them. Mostly they «reserved» their spite for each other for their «leisure time», or came to complain to me, sometimes together, sometimes individually.

Thus, with verbal thrust and parry, Liri Gega expressed her opinion on the main problem:

«Has the line of the Party been sectarian or has it not? This is what we should discuss. I personally have acted according to the line...»

I saw Velimir Stojnić beaming as soon as this «declaration» of Liri Gega's was translated. He quickly noted it down and nodded his head in approval. In the endless meetings which we were to hold later, when we went down to Berat, this cunning inimical claim of Liri Gega's that «I have acted according to the line», was to be a powerful weapon in the hands of Velimir Stojnić and his collaborators. Liri Gega's flagrant sectarianism (it really was flagrant) was to serve them as the basic «argument» to «prove» that the line of the CPA had been sectarian!

Throughout the whole debate Nako Spiru was extremely busy. He was rapidly writing goodness knows what in a notebook. Later I was to learn that he kept detailed notes from our meetings written in Italian to hand to his friend Dizdarević. From that time on this became a permanent «duty» of

Nako and I did not understand how this was done legally and openly before our eyes.

Many years later I was to learn that, amongst other things, the minutes of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA (the Berat Plenum) written in Italian were found in the Central Archives of the Party. The young comrades who were working with the files of that time asked in astonishment at this «discovery»: «Why these minutes in Italian, why were they translated?!» When I was told of this I laughed and recalled the tense meetings of the autumn of 1944 and the notebooks of the «tireless» Nako which were filled one after the other. However, the cunning Nako was to manoeuvre beautifully with this «extra burden»: in acute situations when it was not in his interest to express his opinion, he buried himself in his «notes» and did not raise his head at all.

Nevertheless, his opinion on what should be done was sought, too.

«When things are prepared well, disagreements are easily resolved,» he said — a statement that could have a hundred meanings.

As for Ramadan Çitaku, speaking in his usual slow, calm way, like the men of Kosova (he came from there, hence the pseudonym Baça), he replied:

«To think before you speak is a good habit, but I want to say one thing: the problem before us is not whether Comrade Enver, on the one hand, or Comrade Velimir, on the other hand, is right. Comrade Enver presented the theses of the main report of the Bureau which will be delivered at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party. These theses are from all of us, because, for better or worse, we have all had our say and have all done the work for the line which we have adopted and which we all know. Therefore, I don't understand why we should take long to give our opinion about whether or not Comrade Velimir's criticisms of the line which we have all endorsed and followed are well based?!»

This straightforward and logical comment of Ramadan Çitaku's, following the opposition which he had expressed in

the earlier meeting about the admission of Stojnić to the meeting of the Bureau, certainly put a red ring round the name of Baca in the Yugoslav plotters' notebook. The open interference and pressure which they exerted on the Bureau during October for the expulsion of Ramadan Çitaku from the Bureau of our Central Committee, was not accidental.

Precisely this first meeting of our Bureau in the presence of Velimir Stojnić and his «theses» were to serve as an «official» platform for the whole series of meetings, discussions and endless quarrels which were to consume valuable hours, days and nights during October and November of that year when we had so much work ahead of us on the eve of Liberation.

In these meetings, «of course» the Yugoslav comrade, Tito's delegate, would also take part and would not leave matters simply at what he said at Odriçan, but was to continue his attacks on the line of our Party in the most brutal way, making me «the main culprit» for the «grave errors» which had allegedly been observed in the line of our Party in the time of the war.

Although he was not outstanding for his «keen mind», as an intriguer and trained agent of Tito and Ranković he did his work well. Later we were to realize that he did everything according to a scenario carefully prepared in advance by the Yugoslav leadership. This secret scenario was based on two «weapons» which the Yugoslavs had in their hands: First, on the trust and respect which our Party nurtured for the CP and the war of the peoples of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Tito. Second, on the work they had begun much earlier to prepare their agency within the leadership of our Party.

As I said above, we were interested in strengthening our internationalist relations with them and, as communist comrades, wanted to benefit from that good experience that might be applicable in our country. But those things which seemed to us incorrect or unsuitable for our conditions, we had not accepted and did not accept. Despite the repeated contradictions we had had with the Yugoslav comrades, we had not

lost our faith in the CPY and Tito. This was precisely what the Yugoslav leadership had instructed Velimir Stojnić to exploit.

Besides this, the Yugoslavs had long had in their hands detailed information about the main comrades of our leadership, about their level, character, tendencies, temperament, the abilities of each of them and the standing they enjoyed in the Party and among the masses, etc. It was not for nothing that in his letter of September 1942, Tito asked for the biographies of the comrades who were elected to the CC of the Party at the 1st National Conference. Later, Blažo Jovanović, Vukmanović-Tempo and others were to supply their leadership with detailed information, gathered in meetings with us or in other, secret ways. The Yugoslav leadership studied this carefully and when the time was approaching to put the finishing touches to the plan of action for the «Stojnić mission», they urgently recalled Dušan Mugoša from Albania, because, as we were told, «he was charged with another task». As has been revealed since, including recent times, Dušan Mugoša under the pseudonym Çalamani had recruited secret agents in the ranks of the cadres, both military and civilian, in the regions where he operated. But let us return to the time of the war when three to four months after the departure of Mugoša, Stojnić arrived in Albania, very well prepared.

In this way, no doubt under orders from Tito and Ranković, Velimir Stojnić was now putting the information gathered about us to successful use: both to suppress my resistance and that of other sound comrades of the Party and to encourage the anti-party factional work of Sejfulla Malëshova, Koçi Xoxe, Nako Spiru and their associates. Hence, he set about and at Odriçan succeeded in creating the following situation: everything which «Velo» said or did «was right», because «Tito and the CPY said this and whoever opposed it was an enemy and had to be fought».

Right from this initial phase of his secret activity, Stojnić succeeded, for the most varied reasons and motives, in

winning over a number of the main comrades of our leadership.

Who were the main ones?

One of them was Sejfulla Malëshova. He is known and I'm not going to give a biography of him, but the fact is that his worth at the time of the war was zero. He did nothing, did not carry out any task with which we charged him, allegedly had ability with the pen but did not produce even one poor leaflet. He was a prime example of laziness. I don't know how and from what source he had gained a reputation as «a professor of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow», because he did not prepare even one lecture. His political ideas on many questions were wrong and markedly liberal. He was a careerist who liked flattery and privileges and was the prototype of a petty-bourgeois. All these characteristics of Sejfulla Malëshova were to the liking of the Yugoslav Velimir Stojnić both for that time and for the future, and therefore he supported him in all sorts of ways. Sejfulla was quick to quarrel with the comrades over any petty thing, over a toothbrush, for example. He was characterized by pronounced conceit. He claimed that he was «a veteran revolutionary», that he had «come from Moscow» and that he was «a professor of Marxist theory», therefore he nurtured the idea that he ought to be the undisputed «chief» of the Party and the National Liberation War. Since this was not being realized, he was silently in opposition to the Party. He considered me as the person who had occupied the place «predestined for him even before he set foot in Albania». Apart from me, nobody bothered to listen to this megalomaniac. Regardless of all his shortcomings and mistakes and the criticism which I made of him, still my behaviour towards him was correct.

The Yugoslavs had thoroughly apprehended Sejfulla's nature, especially his ambition to be «party chief» and had found in him the suitable man, even if only for a period, to develop their work of disruption in our Party and to eliminate me. So, Stojnić and Dizdarević kept Sejfulla close beside them, cunningly flattered his petty-bourgeois pride and

even dropped such hints as «what a pity that with a capacity such as yours, you are still only a candidate member of the Central Committee», etc. Hence, very quickly they made Sejfulla their man, maintained close relations with him, set him to work and greatly «praised» his «theoretical abilities», especially when Sejfulla viciously attacked the Party over altogether non-existent stands and faults.

Sejfulla Malëshova, as the petty-bourgeois, liberal democrat and Trotskyite he was, was quite incapable of keeping out of the maelstrom into which the Yugoslavs were driving him. From the depth of hostility to which he had sunk he began his base attack against the Party. According to him, «the real existence and struggle» of the Party had begun now «that Comrade Velimir Stojnić is putting matters in order», implying, along with Velimir Stojnić, himself too.

The other element on whom Stojnić relied heavily was Koçi Xoxe. He was an old member of the Korça Group, a small tradesman who was included in the group of workers because he worked as a tinsmith. At first he loved the Party and communism, but was cowardly, made no efforts to extend his horizon and to raise the level of his knowledge, was one of those few workers of Korça in whom arrogance and haughtiness were obvious and who remained, you might say, «illiterate». Neither he nor Pandi Kristo made any effort to learn. Koçi Xoxe learned a few isolated things and all the time scribbled a few illegible notes which only he could decipher. Even these he did not write on normal paper but on envelopes. This was a mania of his. However, he did not need much paper, because he wrote little or nothing. Koçi was neither an organizer nor a man of action. He had a great opinion of himself and posed as being everything. His only merit was based on the fact that he was a worker and that is why he had been elected to the leadership and I respected him. I tried to help him, but I also criticized him, because he was not brilliant in anything — on the contrary.

The Titoites had been working on him for a long time through Vukmanović-Tempo, since he came to Albania and

took Xoxe with him on his «Balkan» travels to Greece. As I said, at that time I saw nothing wrong in Tempo's association with Koçi Xoxe and agreed that they should go together to Greece twice, because of the additional fact that Xoxe knew the Greek language and originated from Negovan. However, Koçi Xoxe returned from Greece completely the man of Tempo and the Yugoslav secret agency.

All the time he was in prison we had respect for Koçi. When he came out of prison and worked together with me in the leadership we were disillusioned. We sent him with the task of leading the struggle in Korça; he kept himself busy with «the base and the rear» and concerned himself with the clothing that was gathered in Lavdar and Punëmira. There he was given every opportunity to work, to create and to organize, but he proved to be an undistinguished comrade of the leadership and made no concrete contribution to the work of the Party, let alone that of the army. With the conceit and pretensions he had, it was inevitable that he would cultivate a great internal discontent. Of course, Tempo was well aware of his spiritual state and it was well known also to Velimir Stojnić who took him over, worked on him, urged him in the direction we mentioned above and made him a weapon against our Party and against me personally. Brainwashed and inflated in this way, Koçi Xoxe emerged as one of the «persecuted proletarians» and «one of the men of the Party with a proletarian heart and great value for the Party».¹

The third person whom Stojnić managed to win over was Nako Spiru.

Nako was unlike the other two from a number of aspects. He was intelligent, clear on the line, courageous and a good organizer. I liked and respected him and, after the death of Qemal, recommended him to replace Qemal in the Youth

¹ Later, Ranković, the Yugoslav counterpart of Koçi Xoxe, did not fail to recommend Koçi Xoxe even to Stalin as «a leader with a proletarian spirit», «the most resolute» and «the most clear» in the leadership of the CPA (!), etc.

Organization and in the leadership of the Party. I continually consulted with Nako, because most of the time we were together. At all times he was in the effective leadership.

However, just as much as the other two, Nako Spiru was a petty bourgeois in his spirit and he had a number of very marked negative traits. He was extremely ambitious and inclined to intrigues. He had gossip and criticism, both justified and ill-founded, on the tip of his tongue. He did not fail to encourage those he liked to advance and to praise them, he was a person who played favourites and worked to fulfil the great desire he had to surround himself with people who listened to him, obeyed him and carried out the orders he gave. Nako was extremely inquisitive and rummaged around to discover the pettiest personal facts about anyone. Many a time when he came and told me petty personal details, which were none of our business, about this or that person, I was astonished at him and criticized him.

«Where do you hear these things, Nako?» I asked him reproachfully.

«I have my methods and my people who keep me informed,» he replied.

All these were dangerous tendencies for a communist and a leader and, apart from other things, as a result of these tendencies, Nako became involved in that dirty anti-party work which Tito's emissaries hatched up.

The Yugoslavs knew these serious defects and came to know them better. Velimir Stojnić and especially his aide, Nijaz Dizdarević, who was allegedly engaged with the work of the youth, fostered these ambitions in him and compromised him very gravely. They went so far that Nako Spiru was to send Tito and the CC of the CPY secret reports written in his own hand, reports which they used against him later as pressure and some of which they published, including those parts in which, while describing «the deplorable situation of our war, the mistakes and bad situation in the Party», he attacked me, put the blame on me and sought their aid to ensure that

I was removed from the post of General Secretary of the Party. This is how far this comrade went in his anti-party work. The Yugoslavs, carefully studying Nako's careerist tendencies, his petty-bourgeois desire for power, his spirit as a carping critic, flattered his pride and ambition and encouraged him in all these directions. Nako was to associate himself with their «criticism» and «accusations» of our line, not because he was «mistaken» in his evaluation of the line. In the Yugoslavs' «accusations» Nako saw the possibilities for power which were being opened up. If the past line were to be rejected as «incorrect», the main bearer of that line, the General Secretary of the Party, would be rejected, too. Who would take his place?! Obviously, he who contributed most to blackening the past and who would win the affection and gratitude of the Yugoslavs in this way. Because this is how he judged matters, Nako was to involve himself with all his might in the plot, brutally trampling, not only on the Party, but also on the sacrifices of his own life in the 3 to 4 years of the war.

These then were the three main brigands whom the Yugoslavs, through their emissary Stojnić, were now to unleash in all their ferocity against the line of the Party and against the indisputable victory which we had achieved and were achieving in the war.

Naturally, the portrait which I painted above of these elements could never have been made or even imagined with this clarity at Odričan or even later when we went down to Berat. Irrespective of those shortcomings with which I was acquainted, I considered these people as comrades and treated them as comrades of the leadership of the Party in every step and action which we took. That is why, when I heard the gravest opinions and accusations against the Party from their own mouths, I was taken aback and felt that I was facing a group of comrades who were placing themselves *en bloc* against the line of the Party and personally against me, the General Secretary. Naturally, I did not realize immediately that we were faced with an organized plot. These three com-

rades of the leadership disguised everything with their «concern» to «examine the issues», to «evaluate the past correctly», to learn from «the experience and comradely criticism of the Yugoslav brothers», to «eliminate the mistakes», to «proceed better in the future», to come before the Central Committee as «clearly as possible» with «principled criticism and self-criticism», indeed with «Bolshevik» criticism and self-criticism, etc. In short, all of them were to vow from start to finish that they were acting solely for «the good of the Party», for «its salvation» (!). In fact, however, all these vows about «the good of the Party» were a bluff, a mask to conceal the plot which had been hatched up to the detriment of the Party behind my back and the backs of all the other comrades who remained in sound principled positions.

In this meeting of the Political Bureau in which Stojnić launched his accusations, Liri Gega took part, too, but it was her «bad luck» to be used by the Yugoslav agency as the «scapegoat». As I mentioned above, during his «service» in the region of Vlora in the spring and summer of 1943, Dušan Mugoša became well acquainted with Liri Gega, took note of her many weaknesses, especially her ambitious and careerist spirit, and kept close to her to foster these shortcomings in the interest of his work as an agent. To give the devil his due, Mugoša carried out this dirty anti-party work with Liri Gega and with a number of others in masterly fashion. The sectarian actions which were recognized and had already been condemned by our Party were, in the first place, the fruit of the work of Dušan Mugoša as an agent, in which his «pupil» and agent Liri Gega displayed obvious zeal.

For these things, Dušan Mugoša deserved the heaviest condemnation, but in fact he did not leave Albania under a cloud. On the contrary, after performing the role with which his leadership had charged him, by recruiting and fouling whomever he could. Duqi cleared out and left our Party a «heritage» of «mistakes of sectarianism» which the leadership of the CPY now needed to accuse the leadership of our Communist Party of being «incompetent» and «sectarian».

But in order to make these «accusations» stick and seem to have a concrete basis, the Yugoslavs now had to «attack» their loyal agent Liri Gega, even if only temporarily, as «the embodiment of the sectarian line of the CPA». The wide-ranging attack which was made on our Communist Party was hidden behind «Liri's mistakes».

All this painful anti-party history was to take place during the months of October and November in the liberated city of Berat where we arrived, as far as I remember, a few days after the «platform» meeting at Odriçan.

On the eve of the plot

The establishment of the main leadership of the Party, the Anti-fascist General Council and the General Staff in the liberated city of Berat, after about four years of fighting and battles in the difficult conditions of illegality, showed that decisive historic moments for our country had arrived. The National Liberation War was being crowned with major successes. The correct Marxist-Leninist line of the Party was leading our people towards the final victory. The love and trust of the people and the partisans for the Party was great and deeply implanted in their hearts, because it was the Party which educated them, organized them, armed them and led them into the war and to victory.

We had virtually liberated the south of Albania. Thus, the General Staff had come down to the liberated city of Berat and there we prepared the strategic plan of the assault for the liberation of Tirana. A little before we entered Berat, the German rearguard which was encircled by our forces shelled the city. A number of houses were destroyed, but no one was killed. This attack was like the last gasp of an asthmatic, because freedom had already triumphed in these parts. From here we dispatched the orders for military opera-

tions to divisions, brigades and other territorial units, which were to assemble and begin the assault on the capital and, after they liberated it, to pursue the enemy hotly until the complete liberation of Albania. I was in Berat when I received the news about the liberation of our beloved capital city, and a little later, the news of the liberation of virtually all Albania. From Berat I issued the order to some other brigades of our triumphant army to cross our state borders and advance into Yugoslavia. There these brigades, together with two other brigades of our army (the 5th and 3rd), which had received orders to cross the border in September and had liberated most of Kosova, were to continue the war against the German nazis, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Yugoslav partisan comrades. I instructed our partisans that they must fight unsparingly in complete unity with the Yugoslav partisans and in an internationalist spirit for the liberation of the peoples of Yugoslavia. And the Albanian partisans made the word of their Communist Party a reality. They fought with great heroism in Kosova, Montenegro, Sandjak, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia and Macedonia. In these battles hundreds of our partisans were killed and thousands wounded. But the Titoites trampled with both their feet over their heroism and blood and repaid us with hostility and plots against our Party and our socialist Homeland. Nevertheless, we carried out an internationalist duty, and irrespective of what happens, the peoples of Yugoslavia will never forget this sacrifice which the Albanian people made for them.

There in liberated Berat we had decided to work out and solve a series of important tasks which were to remain in history as outstanding events for those moments and for the future. One of these was the preparation of the report for the meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation General Council which was to be held before the Plenum of the CC of the Party and the drafting of other relevant documents. This meeting of the Council, which we held with complete success, had great historic importance, because there the Anti-fascist Committee was turned into the Democratic Government of Albania. Thus, on the eve

of Liberation the country had its democratically elected government. This government was the main executive and order-issuing organ of our people's state power established by the people through struggle on the ruins of the state power of the enemy classes defeated together with the occupiers.

Another important task was, without doubt, the preparation for the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the Party, a job which, as I said, we had begun at Odriçan, but which, after the interference and «theses» of Velimir Stojnić, was in an impasse and dragging on and on with endless discussions and debates.

During our stay in Berat we had placed the centre of the General Staff in the house of the beys of Vrioni, where we had our offices and where I slept. The other comrades were billeted in other houses of the city. These comrades, such as Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla, turned up once a day, with their hands in their pockets, inquired whether there was any news from the military zones and wandered off again. We had charged Pandi Kristo with the task of «military security», but later it was realized that he busied himself with other work of «security». He observed what was done at the Staff, who came and went, what was discussed, and this he reported to Koçi and Velimir Stojnić. Pandi was one of those elements who was implicated up to his neck in the plot at Berat. He was a nullity from every point of view and, apart from the fact that he came from the ranks of «proletarians» (in fact, he had been an apprentice), there was nothing brilliant about his past, either. From time to time he boasted of being a «veteran» element of the Communist Group of Korça, but all of us knew very well that in 1935, when the Trotskyite faction of Niko Xoxi emerged in this group and opposed the correct line and directives of Comrade Ali Kelmendi, Pandi Kristo was one of the few to associate himself with the factionalist Niko Xoxi. After the deserved denunciation of the faction, Pandi «withdrew» from it, «admitted» his grave mistake, and united with the sound part of the group. However, he did not rid himself of his old vice of engaging in factionalist activity. Especially after the spring of 1943 he joined up

with the other Xoxe, Koçi, turned into a blind follower of his and, consequently, placed himself in the service of that agency which had recruited Koçi Xoxe — the Yugoslav agency. All through the years of the war he had gone almost «unnoticed» and he began to move and show up in the autumn of 1944, precisely when Koçi Xoxe and Stojnić considered it in order to activize him for their sinister aims.

As for Liri Gega, she stayed «closer» to me, impelled by other motives and for other objectives. She thought that rank and positions were shared out in my office and she aimed to grab a big slice for herself. She made herself quite ridiculous with her desire for the limelight. At times she would come to me with a piece of paper in her hand:

«Have a look at this!» she said proudly. «I've drafted two laws. If you agree, we can print and distribute them.»

«Take them to Doctor Nishani¹ to see,» I replied ironically. «He and the comrades with him know about these matters.»

«Let us approve them in the Bureau first,» insisted Liri, «and send them to the Doctor all ready.»

It would simply turn back to the work I had in front of me and Liri would go out. A little later she would come back with another «proposal». One day she stopped me in the street when I was going with Nako and Koçi to see the hall where, shortly after this, we were to hold the meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation General Council.

«I've made a draft of the government,» she said in all seriousness, and held out to me a piece of paper. «I've allocated all the ministers and the Council of Ministers. Take it and

1 Omer Nishani (1887-1954) — patriot and revolutionary democrat, one of the prominent figures of our National Liberation Movement. From September 1943 a member of the National Liberation General Council, at the Congress of Përmet he was elected chairman of the Anti-fascist National Liberation General Council. After the liberation of the country, from 1946 to July 1953 he was President of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the PRA.

look at it when you have time, but you know that this matter can't wait...»

Nako took the paper from her hand, and after blowing a cloud of tobacco smoke over «the government of Liri», he began to examine it with his well-known sarcasm.

«Your 'government' has two shortcomings,» he said to Liri. «You have left the post of one deputy prime minister blank and your name, my poor fool (he had this favourite expression on the tip of his tongue), does not figure anywhere. Oh, I beg your pardon,» he added, «you have left it out from modesty...»

«No, on my honour I didn't!» said Liri. «I did not leave that space for myself, but I could find no one to fill it.»

«Very well,» I told her, «take it to Pandi Kristo, because he is gathering up the proposals.»

There were some amusing notes about Liri Gega's crude eccentricities but we had no time to waste on them and neither the moment nor the atmosphere were suitable for such things. In general a sombre atmosphere prevailed, especially around Baca and me.

Under the pretext that I was occupied with work, because brigade commanders, members of the Council and other party comrades came to meet me, Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla and company established a silent, undeclared boycott against me.

The arrival of Hysni Kapo and Gogo Nushi at Berat¹ somewhat improved my spirits, because these comrades brought me the warm affection and sincerity of communists. They came from the fighting front, and not from the back rooms where intrigues and plots were hatched up.

Meanwhile the house where Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević or, as it was called, «the Yugoslav Military Mis-

¹ Hysni Kapo, member of the CC of the CPA, political commissar of the 1st Corps of the NLA which, at that time, was engaged in operations in Northern Albania.

Gogo Nushi, member of the CC of the CPA and until then political secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party for Tirana.

sion» stayed had been turned into a «main centre of the work» and gossip. There Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla and others stayed for hours on end. I saw this great «affinity» and I did not like it, because they were wasting a lot of time and keeping somewhat aloof from me precisely at a time when we had an endless series of jobs which had accumulated and many new problems which cropped up at every moment.

From other comrades I was to hear that they were not telling «stories» there, but distorting history. When they came to see me I saw them looking sombre and arrogant. Although the situation created and their behaviour did not make a good impression on me, nevertheless I was not alarmed and did not lose my aplomb. I had long been acquainted with the irritability and moodiness of Nako, while the megalomania and pettishness of Sejfulla Malëshova were quite normal.

Something else attracted my attention at that time. Major Ivanov, the representative of the Soviet Military Mission, came to see me less frequently after he became friendly with Velimir Stojnić. He came just for the sake of form, all dressed up, received some information, and off he went for a walk. One day, I remember, he began to speak in glowing terms about the Yugoslav generals such as Peko Dapčević, Kosta Nadj, etc. Apparently Velimir Stojnić, Nako Spiru and Sejfulla Malëshova were working on Major Ivanov and had won him over.

I continued to work unceasingly in order to cope with the many demands of the army, the state power and the National Liberation Front. Whenever I had any «free time», I concentrated on the report or the «referat», as we called it, which I was to present at the Plenum of the Central Committee. Logic told me that this report, because of the decisive moments at which it would be delivered and because of the forum to which it would be presented, ought to deal forcefully and profoundly with two main issues.

First, since we were on the verge of achieving the complete liberation of Albania, the report «On the Political Line of the CPA» ought to sum up the results of this line from

the founding of the Party, and especially from the 1st National Conference, to Liberation.

Second, the new situation we were entering faced the Party with new, major, cardinal tasks, therefore the second part of the report must, without fail, deal with them profoundly, reflect the major tasks of the future, and hence, determine the future political line of a party in power.

This was my own conviction and this conviction was reinforced when I talked with a number of comrades, and so in this spirit I was writing the report, which I was to deliver at the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the Party. After some time I completed the first draft and distributed it to the comrades of the Bureau to read. On the insistence of Koçi and Nako, who also voiced «the opinion of Comrade Stojnić», a copy was given to Sejfulla Malëshova to read, too.

«It doesn't matter that he is not a member of the Bureau,» said Nako. «Let him see it, because he might give us some ideas, especially in the aspect of the theoretical treatment of the problems.» (!)

However, this variant of the report did not reach the Plenum. From Nako, Sejfulla, Koçi and others a «bombardment» broke out over every phrase and paragraph of the draft which I gave them to read, a bombardment allegedly from their concern that the report should reflect «the truth about the line» as well as possible.

It is a real Odyssey to describe how the «official» variant was arrived at, the one which I was obliged to read at the Plenum, because there was nothing else I could do. I shall mention just a few of these episodes.

Opening the first variant of the report, I made a considered and mature assessment of the line pursued by the CPA in the grave conditions of the war and the terror and arrived at the correct conclusion that the political line of the CPA during the years of the war had been a correct and consistent line, a line on the basis of which the Party itself grew bigger and stronger and under its leadership a whole people was achieving the decisive victory.

Sejfulla and Nako came frowning into the room where I was working and began:

«Right from the outset there's exaltation,» said Sejfulla. «There's excessive praise for the general line of the Party.»

«On what do you base this remark?!» I asked him.

«In order to determine the character of a line accurately, all its component parts must be balanced correctly,» Sejfulla began his «philosophizing». «Here you stress the general. But you overlook the particular, the sectarianism and opportunism, each of which has appeared at different times. The whole must be taken into consideration, because there's no general without the particular.»

«Listen, Sejfulla,» I said, «I'm not opposed to your general or your particular, but this is neither the place nor the time for spinning words. Tell me concretely on what do you base the things you say?»

«You mention only the successes, the victories, the positive! Agreed, but why don't you point out the sectarianism and opportunism which have shown up?»

«First,» I said, «I don't deny the opportunist or sectarian manifestations and stands, and they have been pointed out in the proper place. Second, and this is the main thing, we have achieved a great victory. Neither sectarianism nor opportunism could have led us to this victory, but only a correct line.»

«That's what you think, but our opinion is different,» replied Sejfulla.

I was not so much surprised at his «opinion» as at the coolness with which he spoke. I felt that matters were now much worse. Moreover, Sejfulla's emphasis on «our opinion», uttered in the presence of Nako, who up till now had kept out of the argument, biting his finger nails from time to time with his characteristic irritability, made me realize that they had not come to make some criticisms, but were demanding essential changes. Nevertheless, I was convinced that the political line of the Party during the years of the war had been correct, and I had stressed and defended this a number of

times in arguments with Velimir Stojnić, therefore I did not retreat. But they did not retreat, either.

«Are you of the same opinion as Sejfulla, Nako?» I asked him.

«Absolutely!» replied Nako tersely.

«We must consider it together with the others, but let us continue,» I told them.

Sejfulla took some crumpled scraps of paper from his inside pocket and spread them on the table. His untidy scrawl, like the efforts of a first-year pupil, immediately struck my eye and suddenly the fact crossed my mind that in his whole lifetime Sejfulla had had very little occasion to write in Albanian. However, this was just a passing thought. The whole series of the most astonishing «observations», «criticism» and the dirtiest «accusations» began.

«The Front!» he raised his voice at one moment as if something had occurred to him. «The line of the Party regarding the Front! You have embellished it greatly, Enver! Many mistakes have been made in the line toward the Front. How was the Conference of Peza organized?! Try to remember! Why didn't Lumo Skëndo¹ and Ali Këlcyra² attend it? Why didn't the Party win over these and many other patriots with influence, but allowed them to line up behind fascism? What about Abaz Kupa? Why did Bazi withdraw from the Movement and go over to reaction? What about other chiefs like these and the people around them?» Sejfulla was beginning to get wound up. «No! The Front did not open its doors as a mass organization should have done and did not open them not because they couldn't be opened, but precisely because the sectarian line of the Party was the factor which led to such a result.»

I listened to him declaiming so haughtily and, suddenly,

1 Pseudonym of Mithat Frashëri, chairman of the CC of the Balli Kombëtar.

2 See footnote on p. 71 of this book.

just as I was getting very angry, I remembered Lenin's famous remark about «brainless philosophers».

I had the prototype of such a philosopher standing in front of me. However, the argument was not in the field of «pure» philosophy. I controlled my anger and fixed my eyes on the small pasty white face I had before me:

«Sejfulla,» I said, «when we were preparing and holding the Conference of Peza in the heat of the war, as like as not you did not even know that a village called Peza existed in Albania. As like as not, at that time you did not know that we had formed our Communist Party, that we were arousing the people in the war, that we were taking the fate of the Homeland and the people into our hands. You were still abroad in exile at that time, Sejfulla, so I ask you now: How do you know how we organized the Conference of Peza...?! Second, from what do you draw the conclusion that the Party drove Lumo Skëndo, Ali Këlcyra and the other scum of Ballist reaction under the skirts of the occupiers? Third, how do you know that the line of the Front was sectarian and its doors were closed to those who wanted to fight? In short, my question can be summed up like this: From whose positions, in whose name and in whose favour are you making these accusations and insinuations that you mentioned?!»

«Please,» he mumbled, now deadly pale. «You are trying to stand over me, and I have criticism about this, too: you want to impose your opinions on us by all means. You...»

«Just leave me out of this. You made accusations against the Party and its line. You must answer for these accusations, I'm only one person and this has no great importance.»

«What has no great importance?! The chief of the Party is the central figure and in his hands...»

«Sejfulla,» I interrupted, «stop dodging the issue, answer the questions I asked you!»

«Our conclusion is that which I mentioned,» he tried to pull in his horns and stole a glance at Nako.

The debate with Sejfulla and Nako went on at length,

and, later, the others were to enter into these «discussions». With the exception of Baca, they were all unanimous.

For many parts they brought me fragments and phrases ready prepared and insisted in unison that their «discovery» must certainly go into the report. I opposed them, brought forward arguments, but it was impossible to «convince» them. I recalled events and stands of the past, compared them with the Marxist theory, examined them from all aspects, but I could never convince myself that we had acted wrongly. «But why do the comrades think differently?» I asked myself over and over again. This sudden about-face was worrying me just as much as their endless «criticism» and accusations.

Meanwhile Koçi came and insisted that in my report I must stress the «outstanding contribution of Comrade Tito to the progress of our Party», Nako came and demanded that «that part about the youth should be revised because it comes out feeble», Liri Gega came and said, «That business about sectarianism is nothing, the stress should be against opportunism».

«We should add,» put in Sejfulla, «that our stand towards the Balli Kombëtar has always been vacillating, hesitant and opportunist.»

«Up till now you have talked about a 'sectarian stand', how did it become opportunist?» I asked him.

«Dialectics envisages both!» concluded Sejfulla and racked his brain to find where else the report should be «edited».

Naturally, in the report which I had handed them I came out with self-criticism and criticism about the work, but Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla and the others, who had aims which I could not know at that time, on all occasions when there was any mention of shortcomings or weaknesses found it easier to strengthen the dose in order to attain the ends that they had decided on behind the scene. As soon as they saw, for example, that I emphasized in the proper place that «manifestations of sectarianism and opportunism have appeared», Sejfulla jumped up:

«Let us make it 'have been manifested openly, frequently, and in obvious ways'...»

«In alarming ways!» «corrected» Nako there and then.

«Very good,» agreed the «philosopher». «So, let us leave it like this, 'a large doze of both sectarianism and opportunism has appeared openly and frequently in alarming ways'.»

One of the first things which struck me was the complete conformity of the «opinions» of our comrades with those of the Yugoslav «comrades». I had heard the same views from the mouth of Tempo a year or so earlier at Labinot and Kucaka. Stojnić had repeated the same accusations to me at Helmës and Odrigan during September and October, and now Sejfulla, Nako and Koçi were repeating the same things.

What did this mean?

The stand of Nako, in particular, seemed to me quite astonishing and beyond understanding. If there was anyone who was more informed and linked most directly with the line of our Party, this was Nako, one of my closest collaborators during the grave years of the war. What had happened to him now? Why had he turned against himself?!

Meanwhile, the endless meetings of the Bureau of the Central Committee continued, meetings in which the exchanges of loaded remarks went on and on and ready-made phrases were served up to me in the room where I was working on the report and other materials. I cannot remember exactly how many times we met during the period of two months that we stayed at Berat and how many whole nights we wasted in unprincipled debates and quarrels. However, since the problems which were raised and enlarged on were more or less the same, it could be said that all those meetings and discussions were sessions of a single meeting. Right from the outset the discussions took a wrong course and from those moments I felt clearly that the «word» Velimir Stojnić had brought to Odrigan had done us great harm.

Naturally, the true aims of Stojnić's intervention were still not clear to me and I had no way of knowing what they were. But the fact that Koçi and Nako were so greatly in-

fluenced by what Stojnić said was very obvious. It seems to me, I thought, that Koçi and Nako are displaying their solidarity with Stojnić's «criticism» and «accusations» with the aim of demonstrating to him and to others that they are «capable» of understanding the «mistake» and taking a stand towards it, and, moreover, are «capable» of rejecting what they have accepted and approved in the past for the sake of «improving the situation».

Undoubtedly, a self-critical stand towards the mistakes of the past is a norm for mature and devoted communists. In the concrete instance, however, what in fact was more than right, was being called wrong. In this instance, I thought, the mistake of the comrades lies in the fact that they suffer from an inferiority complex. They are unable to make a proper assessment of what we have all done together and to defend it with all their might, but on the contrary, reject it simply because «the Yugoslav delegate told them to do so». I could never reconcile myself to this sort of action, therefore, I tried carefully with all my might to convince the comrades of the truth. By producing facts to oppose what Velimir Stojnić said about our line, I fought especially to make the comrades clear so that they would understand that we had no reason to give up or to reject the things in which we were right, simply because «Velimir says so». Indeed, through my open opposition, I strove to convince them that no calamity would occur if we opposed our guest's «criticism» to his face.

I saw with regret, however, that neither Koçi nor Nako was convinced. They persisted in their attitude, hopping from one point to another. In these meetings Liri Gega was «on my side», but only on one problem — «sectarianism».

«My actions have not been sectarian but necessary and correct,» she insisted. «We were at war, there was no time for idle talk...!»

As for Ramadan Çitaku, he mostly listened, prepared to say «something», but the hasty interjections of Nako, Koçi and Liri either interrupted him when he began to speak, or did not allow him to speak at all. After a number of sessions

of such arguments, their attacks, especially those of Koçi Xoxe, were suddenly focussed on Liri Gega and Ramadan Çitaku: strong accusations of sectarianism were levelled against Liri Gega, while Baca was accused of inactivity. It was proposed and decided that both of them should be expelled from the Political Bureau, and since this left only three of us, there and then it was proposed to co-opt two others.

«We should do this right now,» said Koçi Xoxe, «and later, to put the thing in order, we should put our proposal and decision on the expulsion of these two to the Plenum! We should also raise the election of other comrades to the Bureau there, too. For the moment, however,» he continued, «I think we should co-opt to the Bureau two of the best comrades, Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo! These two will bring a new spirit to the Bureau.»

I shall speak later about what was hidden behind these proposals and decisions which were put forward and carried out there and then. At present I want to point out some of the impressions which I formed at those moments.

First, I could not but be astounded at the fact that Koçi's «proposal» was made quite «unexpectedly», and equally unexpectedly was at once approved by Nako and Velimir as though it were about something simple, like getting rid of two chairs and not of two comrades of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. How could I explain this? «Inexcusable irresponsibility in the solution of problems and the settling of personal animosities (I had in mind especially the relations between Koçi and Liri) by way of vengeance and not in the communist way,» I thought at those moments.

Second, two new members of the Political Bureau were proposed and approved there and then, without any preliminary study, consultation or examination of the persons, their stand, and so on. How was Koçi able to come out with these two names so suddenly?! And how could they be accepted «immediately», without consulting the Central Committee, or at least consulting those comrades who were in Berat at that time?

At those moments I branded this activity, too, as «irres-

possibility», «taking hasty decisions», «basing the election of cadres on personal sympathies and relations», etc.

My opposition to these unexpected proposals could not have any effect and it didn't because I was one against two, without mentioning Velimir Stojnić whose face was beaming because Koçi Xoxe had «seized the initiative» like this.

Later it emerged clearly that the proposal was not unexpected and the approval of it was not given «irresponsibly» or «hastily» by Nako and Koçi. On the contrary, everything had been well calculated, had been discussed and weighed up carefully behind the scenes. Amongst others, Pandi Kristo was to make this quite clear four years later at the 11th Plenum¹ of the CC of the Party in September 1948.

«At Berat,» admitted Pandi Kristo, «Nako approached me and told me about Miladin's 'mistakes' and about the dissatisfaction with Enver, Baca and Liri. Day by day, he and Koçi talked about such things with me and finally it was decided that Liri and Baca should be removed from the Bureau before the Plenum and at the Plenum the Central Committee should be re-organized. There the question of Enver should be examined because this could not be done in the Bureau. At one moment, I asked Nako,» continued Pandi, «'What is going to be done about the Commander?'² What impression will his removal make among the people and in the Party?' 'We have to persuade him,' Nako replied, 'but if we can't persuade him, the pistol will.'»³

Velimir Stojnić took part in the secret meeting at which what was to be done in the Bureau was decided outside the Bureau.

As Pandi Kristo testified through his own mouth in 1948, he «was influenced»⁴ and began to speak about his discontent.

1 See pp. 552-560 of this book.

2 Enver Hoxha.

3 From the minutes of the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, September 13-24, 1948. CAP.

4 «Koçi was the closest collaborator of Nako, Velo [Velimir Stojnić]

«They don't respect the workers,» Pandi had said at that secret meeting. «I was left out. I was attached to the staff at Kucaka but what did I do? I was reduced to a cook.»

Velimir Stojnić listened and nodded approval.

«Tako je! Tako je!» What is the comrade's origin?»

«Worker,» had replied Koçi. «He's a member of our Central Committee.» «Very good, very good, carry on,» the Yugoslav delegate had encouraged Pandi.

Pandi had poured out everything that came to his mind against the Party, Miladin and me, and Stojnić had asked: «How has this comrade been promoted in the party?» «Through struggle, through efforts!» Koçi had replied (although Pandi himself had said that he had done nothing or at the most had been a staff cook. But Velimir Stojnić valued something else. He valued Pandi Kristo's ability to cook up slanders and accusations).

After this meeting Nako had taken Pandi Kristo aside:

«Congratulations!» he had said. «They (the Yugoslavs) are very pleased with you.»

Two or three days later Pandi Kristo shoulder to shoulder with Sejfulla and Koçi and Nako, linked together by Velimir Stojnić, were to rise as a solid bloc against me in the Bureau.

The second step of the «Stojnić mission» was achieved. The Bureau of our Central Committee was reorganized behind the scenes and now, in its composition of five members, four were obedient tools of the Yugoslavs.

Understandably, after this the confusion, attacks and accusations burst out more openly and prevailed more readily. My isolation became complete not only within the Bureau but also outside it. Automatically, matters were getting worse and

and Dizdar [Nijaz Dizdarević],» said Pandi Kristo amongst other things. «and they influenced me, too. There was not much good and a great deal of evil about Berat. My discontent and that of Koçi favoured the hostile work at Berat, because Nako would not have dared to do it alone.» (*From the minutes of the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, September 13-24, 1948. CAP.*)

* That's it, that's it (Serb in the original).

worse and the day when the Plenum was to be held was approaching. I saw that it would be extremely difficult to determine the line and the tasks for the future. A situation had been created in which they were completely involved with the past, or more precisely with blackening the past.

During one of these days, on the eve of the Plenum, Nexhmije [Xhuglini-Hoxha] came to me. There were tears in her eyes and with a feeling of concern and despair which she was quite unable to conceal she said to me:

«How is this... right on the eve of Liberation you have apparently decided to withdraw me from the leadership of the Youth?»

«Why?» I asked in surprise. «Who told you this?»

«Why pretend you don't know? Nako summoned me and proposed that we take a 'walk'. We walked beside the Osum River and there he told me: 'You came to Berat for nothing... (she was in the Dibra region and the highlands of Central Albania as the delegate of the Central Committee of the Youth to the 2nd Partisan Division and the terrain in which it was operating).

«How do you mean for nothing...?» I asked him,» Nexhmije told me. «Comrade Enver sent me a letter and at the end told me that in November the meeting of the CC of the Youth and the Congress of Anti-fascist Women would be held. I waited for you to notify me, but since no notification came either from you or from the comrades in the Women's organization, I thought your notification must have got stuck somewhere on the way. That's why I came. Why, should I not have come?»

«No, no, since you have come you'd better stay,' Nako told me, 'but you are not to continue to work with the Youth. You have been appointed to another important task as a member of the Agitation and Propaganda Commission attached to the CC of the Party and now you are going to work with Sejfulla Malëshova.'»

Nexhmije told me these things and fell silent. I was silent

for a moment, too, then I pulled myself together and said with a smile:

«Is that what you are upset about?! We have a great deal to do and we can't all be engaged with the Youth. The sector which Nako mentioned is very important, too, especially now that the Party and people are taking state power.»

I spoke in this way because I did not want her to learn about the great quarrels and splits in the leadership. I did not want her to learn about them, because they were extremely delicate problems and had to be kept very secret, but also because I did not want to upset and worry her when, from day to day, we were expecting the great news of the liberation of Albania.

Inwardly, however, I realized that matters were worse than I had thought. By not calling Nexhmije to attend either the Congress of Women or the meeting of the Central Committee of the Youth, Nako and company wanted to keep her away from me, because she might hinder them in what they wanted to do, might hear what was being said and inform me. This struck me immediately and I asked myself: What is this? Are they up to something behind our back...?

However, I kept my mouth shut, because I could not accuse the comrades of such base activity. I was dissatisfied about their activities and stands and my suspicions were building up relentlessly.

I spent those days with Hysni [Kapo] and Gogo [Nushi] but said nothing to them, either. I thought it was all an internal problem of the Bureau and that all the difficulties created would be settled in the end; besides, I considered it would be a violation of party secrecy if I talked to them about it. However, I thought and acted in this way because I still did not know that a plot was being prepared behind the scenes. I did not know about the perfidy which the «comrades» were engaged in every minute, against the Party and people, first of all, but also against me personally. Had I known this, undoubtedly matters would have taken another course. I would have come out openly before the comrades of the CC,

not to brainwash them, but to make the truth clear to them, to warn them about what was being hatched up. And since I did not know what had gone on behind the scenes, I went to the 2nd Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party convinced that we had disagreements in opinions and views with the delegate of the Yugoslav leadership and that the comrades of the Bureau had wrongly expressed their «solidarity» with him, but I had not understood clearly what was really hidden behind this solidarity.

Two or three days before the beginning of the Plenum, Koçi Xoxe came to me all concern and said:

«The vital aid of the Yugoslav comrades, especially of Comrades Tempo and Velo, must be brought out more clearly.»

«What must we stress more about the aid of these comrades?» I asked him in such a «normal» tone of «sincerity» that Koçi did not sense what I was getting at with my question.

«From the founding of the Party to this very day!» he said with amazing zeal. «We must stress especially that the coming of Comrades Tempo and Velo helped us to distinguish the major mistakes of the past and the present and to dot the i's better.»

At first I saw the conformity of the «arguments» of Tempo and Stojnić with those of Koçi and Nako and Sejfulla with surprise, and then saw them as a coincidence, but during the proceedings of the Plenum in particular, I was convinced that it was not a coincidence but an «adoption» of the Yugoslavs' «arguments» by our comrades. This was snobbishness, a sign of immaturity, a symptom of submission and putting themselves unconditionally under the judgment of someone «more powerful», regardless of how the truth stood.

Undoubtedly, all these things were harmful and to be condemned, but I thought that at the Plenum, and especially after it, tempers would calm down, the comrades would reflect correctly, would judge matters better and would correct themselves in the course of the work. It was to be proved subsequently, however, that these arguments of mine were

not realistic. At the most they were expressions of my subjective desire and good positive intentions in estimating a great unknown problem. However, the truth lay elsewhere and it was much more serious and more bitter. Thus, it was to be proved that the opposition of the comrades of the Bureau to the line of the Party and to me was not a chance aberration, but was something pre-arranged and concocted in meetings and discussions behind the scenes with the incitement and under the leadership of Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević.

This was a plot that had been hatched up for two or three months on end in secrecy, behind my back and behind the back of the Central Committee of the Party, and now was to burst in the Plenum in all its ferocity.

The Berat plot

The Plenum began its proceedings on November 23, in the grave conditions I have described above. Apart from the members and candidates elected to the Central Committee of the Party at the 1st Conference of the Party at Labinot in March 1943 (the only absentee was the candidate of the Plenum Mehmet Shehu because he had been charged with carrying out the actions for the establishment and maintenance of order in newly liberated Tirana), Velimir Stojnić also was «invited» to take part in the Plenum as the representative of a sister party. I say «invited» because the way matters stood, Stojnić would have come to the meeting even uninvited, supported by the majority in his favour in the Bureau, in order to carry through to the finish the third stage of his plan — the splitting and disruption of the Central Committee of the Party and the removal of me from the leadership.

As far as I remember the three reports on the agenda were delivered on the first day. A reflection of all that had

been prepared and was simmering behind the scenes was the fact that the first person to speak was Sejfulla Malëshova, who delivered a report «On the present political situation» of the country. The pitiful document which Sejfulla and company had prepared is not worthy of mention. I want to point out only that the «report on the political moment» was more a pathetic declamation written by an opportunist, without any idea or problem, without any directive or task for the moment, let alone for the future. This individual who let the heroic war of the people and the Party pass him by without getting involved in it, he who far from any danger, «sitting in the garden at my ease»¹, warmed his hands on the seared body of the Homeland, now basing himself on the war and heroism of the whole people and Party, found the occasion to boast and strut about what he had no part in. The time had not yet come to express his idea about the «chief of the Party» which he brought out later.

I read the report «On the Political Line of the CPA» which had been intended as the main report delivered at the Plenum. As far as I know, there is a copy in the archives of the Party, but it is a copy of what you might call the «official» variant, of that variant which was prepared with the «assistance», that is to say, with the interference, pressure, «corrections», erasures and additions which Nako, Sejfulla and Koçi made till the last day before the Plenum (Pandi Kristo, as the new member in the Bureau, merely endorsed the «serious criticisms» by his comrades, but was capable of no more). Koçi Xoxe delivered the third report with the laconic title «On Organization». Then the discussion and debates burst out and continued for two to three days on end. Among the contributions there were some that went on for more than two to three hours, such as the first contribution by Nako Spiru (because he spoke time after time) or

1 Sarcasm with lines by Sejfulla Malëshova:

«In the garden at my ease

Singing neath the shady trees.»

one of the contributions of Sejfulla Malëshova, who like Nako and Koçi missed no opportunity to ask for «just a minute to make an explanation» and, once he was on his feet, hovered on and on in the Plenum for more than half an hour.

The 2nd Plenum of our Central Committee, summoned to discuss and accomplish very important historic tasks for the Party and for the future of the Homeland and socialism, was turned completely into the opposite of its main purpose. The majority of the comrades of the Central Committee (not including Naxhiqe Dume and some other) found themselves, to their astonishment and regret, facing a sudden furious attack which struck down and rejected those things which for them were sacred. From the first day, the comrades experienced the same feelings of disillusionment with which I had had to contend for two or three months on end.

The spirit of the reports, especially that of Koçi Koxe, not only rejected everything good from the past but, and this was most important, directed and called on the comrades to consider matters and deal with them in their contributions in the same murky light and from that same distorted viewpoint as Koçi himself. I well remember the frowning faces of the comrades and the complete icy silence which accompanied the reading of the reports from beginning to end. Not accidentally, Nako, Sejfulla and Pandi were the first to rise to take part in the discussion and Stojnić «intervened» a number of times. The aim was to prevent the silence and astonishment of the comrades from turning into the opposite of the «spirit» which was dictated from above. The expected result was achieved. The comrades, disoriented and misdirected, were asked to dig into the past and after this, as can be guessed, many of the contributions followed the course prescribed. Among them there were many correct and balanced contributions, like those of Gogo Nushi, Hysni Kapo, Manush Myftiu and others, but the fact is that a number of members and candidate members of the Central Committee, influenced by the general atmosphere, displayed

marked vacillations at the Plenum and accepted, some more than others, the theses of the Yugoslav delegate and his spokesmen — the group of Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla and Pandi!

In the circumstances in which they found themselves, we can say that this wavering of the comrades was to some extent justifiable and to be expected. Indeed, the comrades of the Plenum were facing greater difficulties than we members of the Political Bureau faced when Velimir Stojnić issued his «directives» for the first time at Odriçan. At that time, we were facing accusations from delegates of another party and, had those premises and ambitions which I mentioned not existed in the other comrades of the Bureau, we would have come out as a bloc against the «guest» and left him with his «criticisms» and the plot itself in his hands. The comrades of the Plenum, however, were hearing the «criticisms» and accusations not just from some «outsider», but from the mouths of such leaders of the Party as Koçi, Nako and Sejfulla. This new circumstance gave the «criticisms» and accusations what you might call the official seal. The chief conspirator Stojnić had not wasted his time during the two or three months of his stay in Albania: the vicious plan of Tito and company was now served up to the Plenum of the CC of the CPA, not with Yugoslav hands, but with the hands of the main part of the Bureau of the CC of our Party! This fact gave the Yugoslav accusations greater «credibility», because it cannot be said that the comrades at that time were at such a level as to be able to distinguish quickly and clearly what was true and what was false in the things that were said. More important still, it never occurred to anybody that this was a plot organized behind the scenes for diabolical aims by those who posed as friends and whom we, unfortunately, considered and publicized as friends.

The main accusation, which pervaded the Plenum from beginning to end and the whole period before it, had to do with the **political line of our Party**. The leadership of our Party and I, in particular, were attacked because allegedly we had been unable to define and pursue a correct line, had

allegedly fallen from sectarianism into opportunism and vice-versa.

As «arguments» to prove this, they presented all the things I described above in the disputes which we had had with Blažo Jovanović and especially Vukmanović-Tempo and Velimir Stojnić. The «new thing» in the Plenum was that these well-known accusations of the Yugoslavs were now presented by Nako Spiru, Sejfulla Malëshova and Koçi Xoxe as «their own», as a result of their «own judgment and evaluation». This occurred, for example, with Nako Spiru who presented as his own Tempo's thesis that «our Party and its Central Committee were caught unprepared by the founding of the Balli Kombëtar and did not understand that the Balli Kombëtar emerged as reaction against the National Liberation Front». The same thing occurred also with the arch-opportunist Sejfulla Malëshova, who, as the self-contradicting fraud he was, accused us of «opportunism» with the Balli Kombëtar during the period when we made efforts to win over the maximum number of nationalists and patriotic elements, especially ordinary people misled by the demagogy of the Balli Kombëtar, etc.

It is not worthwhile to dwell here on the falsity of these accusations of «opportunism», but I want to point out one thing: neither Velimir Stojnić nor his followers had a great deal to say about «opportunist manifestations» or the «opportunist line». In the Plenum they passed lightly over the accusation of «opportunism» (I shall explain why below), and concentrated all their forces and stress on accusations of «sectarianism». This was described as the «greatest evil of our Party and its leadership», the factor which allegedly had hindered and inhibited the development of the Front, the national liberation councils, the organizations of the masses and the Party itself. Likewise, sectarianism was described as the greatest danger for the future, therefore, according to Stojnić, Nako, Koçi and others, accounts must be settled with «sectarianism» and the «sectarians», otherwise neither the Party nor the new Albania would be able to last!

Sejfulla Malëshova, the most perfect embodiment of the classical opportunist that our Party has known, in one of his contributions or interventions went so far as to make the monstrous accusation:

«The pronounced sectarianism in the line,» he declared spitefully, «is turning the Party into a band of terrorists! Our comrades, especially those of the main leadership, have lost the heart of the true communist that treasures human life!»

The fact is that many of the comrades who spoke after him, even some of those who were confused and accepted the spirit which was dictated, attacked and indignantly rejected this accusation of Sejfulla's. I myself, both in the Plenum and before the Plenum, had clashed sharply with Sejfulla over this vile accusation. A few days before the Plenum, in the period when he had been co-opted to the Bureau, he came to my office all «alarm».

«A great terror is being imposed!» he declared angrily.

«Terror?» I asked him in surprise. «Where?»

«In Tirana!» he replied. «Many repentant officers are being killed.»

«In Tirana the great battle for the liberation of the capital is going on,» I said. «It's a life-and-death battle. Is that what you call terror? And what officers are you complaining to me about? Now the war is coming to an end,» I told him. «When we appealed to them to go to the mountains and fight the occupiers together with us they didn't budge from their comfortable shelters. Now they are 'repenting' too late, and we have to settle accounts with the criminals.»

«Ah! This is sectarianism!» said Sejfulla. «You have lost the true heart of a communist who values another man's life and thinks deeply before he decides to wipe out someone who might be corrected and serve the country!»

Apparently, he was angry about the well-deserved sentence which the enemy of the Party and communism Zai Fundo received, since he had shared a whole past in exile with this Zai Fundo — the past of «café communists». Apparently, he was also angry about the elimination in the

course of the war of those officers of the former Royal Army who, after their service under fascism, had turned into agents of the Gestapo and commanded the traitor detachments that fought shoulder to shoulder with the Germans in Tirana and elsewhere.

«This is a grave accusation, Sejfulla, and you'll answer for it,» I told him.

«Yes, of course, I will answer for it!» said Sejfulla arrogantly. «I repeat — our comrades have no idea that a humane international law exists for the repentants and prisoners.»

«Who has repented and when?» I asked him bluntly. «The murderers and plunderers, those who have wallowed in the blood of the people?! Those who, having killed and maimed up to November 15, now on the 16th, that they see their cause is lost, are pretending 'to repent'? No, Sejfulla, for the criminals there are the laws of war and these are the most humane laws.»

«I am not of that opinion!» said the opportunist and went out.

And there, he found the opportunity and the courage, not only to raise his monstrous accusation in the Plenum, but even to go so far as to call the leadership of the Party «terrorist».

The other participants in the plot, Koçi, Nako and Pandi, displayed greater «caution» in the «arguments» which they presented and from many points of view this was more dangerous, because it was more difficult to discredit and expose them there and then. Indeed, Stojnić himself, when he heard Sejfulla's accusation got up and called it «advanced», «hasty», indeed «unjust...»

This was a reminder to the others: don't utter nonsense like Sejfulla, because you will discredit yourselves and our plans will be thwarted!

So Nako, Koçi and Pandi, and also Naxhiye Dume and some others, «confirmed» the sectarianism with «more believable» facts: the «sectarian line towards the Front», the

«sectarian stand towards Ali Këlcyra, Bazi i Canës, Cen Elezi,» etc. Above all, a powerful «argument» in the hands of the plotters was the notorious sectarian actions of Liri Gega and Mehmet Shehu. Many of the comrades who were acquainted with the distorted sectarian actions of these two, brought out new facts and this sufficed to attach the label of «sectarianism» to the line of the Party and its leadership.

However, as for all the other accusations, the truth was quite different. Just as the line had not been opportunist, it had never been sectarian, either.

Naturally, it would be a deception and self-satisfaction with lethal consequences if we were to think that such dangers did not threaten us, or that such manifestations had not appeared. No, there had been isolated instances, but as soon as we learned of them, as soon as the information reached us, we immediately took the necessary measures to deal with them severely and to prevent them from getting any worse.

Bedri Spahiu got up in the Plenum, too, and to be in solidarity with his «comrades», especially with Sejfulla, amongst other things, said:

«There has been no lack of sectarianism, because we were inclined in this direction! For example, in Gjirokastra, in 1942 through our sectarianism we closed the doors of the Front to the nationalists...»!

This was all Bedri Spahiu said about this instance, but he «forgot» or, better, did not want to tell the whole truth, because if he did so he would prove that it was not the line of the Party that was sectarian but the distortion which he himself had made of this line.

As I said, one of the elements who caused us the most problems and trouble in this direction was Liri Gega, especially with the many instances of her sectarian stands in Vlora and in the North, where we sent her in June 1944. Wherever Liri Gega went she immediately placed her authority above that of the Party and the Bureau of the Central Committee, asked leave of nobody and did whatever crossed her mind. We had continually criticized her sternly for these

actions. Koçi Xoxe proposed that we should send her to the North. This was not without a purpose: Koçi Xoxe wanted to have Liri Gega as far away as possible because he considered her his closest rival who had «overshadowed» him and might continue to do so. On the other hand, he was convinced that Liri Gega could not break away from her unhealthy sectarian tendencies and this provided added motives to accuse her of being sectarian and to eliminate her. In fact, in the North she brandished her sectarian sword even more wildly and that is why we summoned her to return to Odriçan with the aim that we would thoroughly and finally analyse her actions, which were completely contrary to the line of the Party.

This was indisputably true in regard to the political line of our Party, a line which, as I said, had been and remained correct and principled and had never been «sometimes opportunist, sometimes sectarian», as Stojnić, Tito's delegate, and the people wound up by him alleged.

The other accusation which was launched at the Plenum and which completely distorted the truth had to do with the **organizational line of the Party**. Koçi Xoxe presented the platform of this accusation in his report. From beginning to end, this report was an ugly distortion of the truth, filled with grave slanders about the organizational line of the Party, but which in fact went beyond the «organizational» bounds and constituted a support for the accusations against the whole political and ideological line of the Party and its leadership.

In this report Koçi Xoxe put forward his hostile anti-Marxist views openly for the first time. From all this mass of accusations and villainous views he expressed, three problems in particular have remained indelible in my mind: the so-called «monopolization of the leadership of the Party by three or four people»; the role of the intelligentsia in the war, in the Front, in the state, etc., etc.; the role of cadres.

I shall speak about these matters later also, because for four or five years on end we were to run up against them every day and, regrettably, were to suffer great damage, but

here I want to point out only where these views had their beginning, and why Koçi Xoxe uttered them for the first time at Berat.

According to the things Xoxe read out, it emerged that during the years of the war three or four people had monopolized the leadership of our Party, and he made it «explicitly clear» that these were, first Miladin Popović, second I, third Ramadan Çitaku, and fourth, for a period, Ymer Dishnica; and then, especially, Liri Gega! The others, according to Koçi, had been pushed aside or not consulted at all.

This was all a grave slander and was made in direct support of the main accusation against our political line. From this it turned out that the line had allegedly been worked out by three or four people and since the line was described as «wrong» from the start, then these three or four persons were the main ones to blame for this, and now they should answer for it.

However, at these moments, Miladin had been recalled, Ymer Dishnica, Liri Gega and Ramadan Çitaku had been expelled *de facto* from the Bureau. Thus, it remained to settle accounts with the one who was still left, with the General Secretary of the Party. According to Xoxe and, after him, according to Sejfulla Malëshova, I was described as «the synthesis of all the mistakes observed in the political and organizational line.»

But the fabrication of this so-called four in the leadership was an attack in many directions and done for many aims. It was not fortuitous that Miladin Popović was listed first among the «four». Indirectly, this was «endorsement» of the Yugoslav thesis that the CPA had not only been created by a Yugoslav, but had been led *de facto* by a Yugoslav!

And now it was not Blažo Jovanović or Tempo that said this, but the organizational secretary of the Party Koçi Xoxe! Obviously, for the Titoites this service of Koçi Xoxe's had great value.

At the same time this absurd placing of Miladin Popović

«at the head» had the purpose of telling the members of our Central Committee that the General Secretary «has been elected to that post for nothing; he has been incapable of leading and has done whatever Miladin told him». Going even further, the upside down presentation of everything in the line pursued was served up to the members of the Central Committee as a complete «argument» to rise not only against the General Secretary, but also against Miladin Popović. All that the Yugoslavs needed in regard to Miladin was an «endorsement»: that he had allegedly been *de facto* leader of the CPA! They wanted nothing else positive about him, but on the contrary, they attacked him openly and wanted our comrades to attack him, too. Having sent Miladin back under orders to Yugoslavia, Stojnić now wanted «proofs» of his «mistakes» with the aim that he would receive «the punishment he deserved». And since they could not say openly, «You are condemned because you did not work for our secret plans», they would say, «You are condemned because in Albania you have been sectarian, opportunist», etc., etc.

It is not worthwhile to prove here why what Xoxe put forward in his report was a filthy slander, but I simply want to point out the indisputable truth that, not three or four or even ten persons, but the whole of our Central Committee led our Party and the National Liberation War, jointly with many dedicated cadres around the Central Committee, while Miladin Popović, who ought to be considered as a comrade of our Party, only assisted to the same extent as each of the other comrades of the Central Committee assisted individually.

I myself, as General Secretary of the Party, had worked with all my strength to play my role as leader and guide of the Party, had tried to guide the Party and the Movement to direct them on the right course, to nurture the comrades with valuable political and organizational directives and instructions, basing myself on the experience of the Party and on the great assistance I was given by the other members of the Central Committee who led the organizations at the base

and the National Liberation War all over Albania. This is the place to say that Miladin Popović grew up along with us. Our Party raised him, just as it raised all of us. He was a truly internationalist comrade, who loved Albania and the Albanian people greatly and on every occasion took a correct internationalist communist stand in defence of the interests of our country and the just stands of our Party.

Never on any occasion have we permitted the monopolization of affairs and neither have we pushed one or the other comrade aside, but on the contrary, we have done everything possible to engage them to the maximum in work, in action and in leadership.

In his accusation, apart from carrying out Stojnić's instruction, Koçi Xoxe at the same time found the opportunity to express his personal dissatisfaction which he had been accumulating for a long time.

Were we to blame for his obvious inactivity?! Never. Immediately after the founding of the Party, when he was elected a member of the Provisional Central Committee, Koçi Xoxe was arrested and remained in prison until the end of April 1943. Of course, for this period, both he and we «blamed» only fascism which locked Koçi in a cell and did not allow him to activize himself in the work which we carried out. With the exception of his good, strong stand in prison, during this period Xoxe did nothing else (and could do nothing else), but nevertheless, at the 1st National Conference we did him a very great honour by electing him to the Central Committee, to the Bureau, moreover, as organizational secretary of the Party, more because he was a worker than for his abilities which we had no possibility of knowing, since, as I said, he was imprisoned soon after the formation of our Party. Simply for this reason an honest communist should have been sincerely grateful to the Party for ever, and when he was given the opportunity should have repayed and justified the honour and trust which the Party placed in him, with all his might. Koçi Xoxe did the opposite. By chance, as soon as he came out of prison, he joined up with Tempo and spent the summer

of 1943 in his company. This was where the decline of Koçi began. Worked on by Tempo he stood aside, shut himself away somewhere in the villages of Korça and turned into a quarter-master behind the lines. Are we to blame for this?! Whenever we held meetings and discussions we summoned him, informed him about everything, sought his opinion, but he contributed nothing. He had nothing to contribute for the benefit of the work, while to the detriment of the work he accumulated «criticisms» and petty grievances and awaited the opportunity to pour them out. Several times on end I personally had pointed out to him that he should display more activity, more initiative, should assume more responsibility for the various matters according to the function he had, but he just listened in silence. In particular, I was concerned by the fact that he was not properly carrying out the task of organizational secretary of the Party, and all of us saw this. Liri Gega, with her thirst for power, did everything possible to take over this task, indeed, she even managed to convince Baca and, to some degree, Nako Spiru, too. We were in Helmës in May 1944, when we were preparing for the 1st Plenum of the CC of the Party. At one moment Liri and Baca came to me and Liri openly put forward the proposal that the question of the organizational secretary of the Party «should be thoroughly examined».

«Why?» I asked her.

«Because Koçi cannot do it! He is completely out of his depth!» she told me.

«We must help him,» I said. «Moreover, several times we have instructed you, in particular, to help him.»

«No, I can do that no longer,» replied Liri. «I am to do the work and he is to be called secretary! That is not good enough. Either he should do the job or we should find some remedy for this.»

«What remedy have you in mind?» I asked her.

«Either he should do the job properly or we should remove him and replace him with someone else.»

I understood from the outset what she was getting at,

but I had not thought that she would be quite such a shameless careerist. I egged her on further:

«Who have you in mind?» I asked her as though I were «very interested».

«Well, some active, militant, vigorous comrade... Shule,¹ for example.»

She mentioned the name of Shule in such a low voice that it could hardly be heard.

«Let us put your ideas before the Bureau,» I said.

«Why in the Bureau?» she objected. «There are three of us here. I have talked this over with Nako and he said to me, 'Put it to Enver.' So, this is the Bureau!»

«Never!» I said. «What do you take us for? You haven't the remotest idea about the organizational matters of the Party, although you pose as the most 'expert' in this field. Whether we are three or five members of the Bureau who happen to be together and discuss as the whim takes us, this will not and cannot be considered a meeting of the Bureau. A meeting of the Bureau must be held, the question must be put forward in the presence of Koçi, we must discuss it thoroughly and make the truth clear there. Do you understand...?»

«I understand!» she said in a faint voice.

In the first meeting after this conversation Liri put forward her «proposal» with the conviction that it would be approved. She presented the matter from the aspect that Koçi had not been active, had withdrawn and shut himself somewhere in Korça, etc. Liri was right in this, but she said everything from a personal position and with careerist aims. However, she did Koçi over properly. We, too, made our criticisms of Xoxe over those things which he deserved.

Koçi Xoxe hung his head and said nothing. He stood up and made a self-criticism in the Bureau and amongst other things he said:

«It is right! I have worked in isolation and have not done what the task required of me.»

1 The pseudonym of Kristo Themelkova.

«If you are not capable of performing your task, then say openly that you are not fit to be in the Bureau!» interjected Liri Gega.

«I can do it better than you,» retorted Koçi. «But you detest me!»

«I detest your inability!» Liri attacked him.

I intervened immediately to cool their tempers.

Nevertheless, on my insistence we rejected Liri Gega's proposal and Koçi was advised to put his whole heart into his work, to acquaint himself thoroughly with the problems and to prove himself in the course of his work.

With his eyes on the floor he murmured something, thanked us for the trust we had in him and «assured» us that he would show himself to be active.

Three or four months after this, Velimir Stojnić arrived and the formerly invisible Koçi Xoxe emerged on the scene, began to move, became «active», opened his mouth and now, here in the Plenum, he stands up and spits on the truth, complains that we had «pushed him aside», without considering it necessary to say one word about why he had dropped into idleness and out of sight, that is, why he had stood aside from the war and the work for months and years on end.

Then who else had allegedly been pushed aside, according to the thesis of Koçi Xoxe?

Only the person who had been closer to the Bureau than all, Nako Spiru. I could never have imagined that such an absurd thing could be said, but the fact is that not only Koçi, but also Nako himself got up in the Plenum and said:

«I did not know that I was in the main leadership of the Party!»

A downright lie! I have spoken in detail in my book of memoirs, «When the Party Was Born», about what place Nako Spiru occupied in our leadership. I only want to say that at those moments my eyes were dimmed with anger, because if there was one person who, right from the outset, had taken part in all the meetings of the Central Committee and the Bureau, who knew all the details, who was better informed

than anyone else, who had frequently spoken in the name of the Central Committee and the Bureau, and indeed, had even taken decisions on their behalf, without preliminary consultation with us, this was Nako Spiru.¹ And now he tells us, «I did not know!»

I blamed Nako's ambitious spirit, the moment of unclarity and blindness which had overwhelmed him, his mean tendency to carping criticism. But I could not understand why Nako Spiru denied everything, denied the truth, his comrades and himself. I still did not know that he was implicated up to his neck in a plot behind the scenes.

This then was the truth about Koçi Xoxe's slander that allegedly the work of the leadership of our Party had been monopolized in the hands of three or four people!

His other «conclusion», that allegedly only the intellectuals predominated and ran things in our Party, and on this account, the Party had allegedly lost its proletarian character, was equally unfounded.

From what Koçi said it seemed that only the intellectuals had waged the war, they filled the Front and they had formed the councils! This was absurd. True, our Party had done good work and had won the support of many progressive and revolutionary intellectuals, but the fact is that these intellectuals played that role in the war that the intelligentsia led by a communist party of the working class could play. The working class and the peasantry bore the brunt, the main burden in the war and, indeed, from the numerical viewpoint, the countryside supplied the overwhelming majority of our fighters. In our whole line throughout the war, in meetings, consultations and conferences, we had always firmly stressed the proletarian character of the Party, had always made the greatest efforts to ensure that the Party was pro-

1 All the correspondence of Comrade Enver Hoxha published in Volumes 1, 2 of his Works, as well as the unpublished correspondence, testifies to the very close links which Comrade Enver Hoxha and the leadership of the CPA maintained with its member Nako Spiru.

letarian, not only in its ideology and program, but also in the composition of its ranks, and to ensure that workers took first place among the new admissions, followed by the vanguard elements of the countryside and that they should be elected to the leading organs of the Party and the war, etc., etc. Not only had we worked out these directives correctly, but we had also striven to ensure that they were applied correctly.

Koçi Xoxe knew these things, but he launched his accusations for ulterior motives: proceeding from the fact that he himself had been a worker, a «proletarian», as he said (but in fact he had been a petty-bourgeois tradesman), he wanted to open the way to emerge at the head of the Party, to become its «chairman», as the «proletarian» he was! He insisted strongly that Stojnić's accusation that «the political line had been wrong» should be accepted and, according to Xoxe, this had come about because the Party «was based on the intellectuals», that they had made «endless mistakes» and were not capable of guiding and leading and that, finally, the Party was a party not of intellectuals but of proletarians and should be led by a proletarian, etc.!

Koçi put this accusation forward at Berat allegedly in a principled way and many could accept it as a correct presentation.

However, there was one person who could not be pleased with what Koçi said and who was to react against him immediately. This was Sejfulla Malëshova. These two, together with Nako as the third, were a group, an orchestra at Berat, but within this «unity» of conspirators there could not fail to be quarrels, feuds, and the usual contradictions of every kind. When Sejfulla took the floor on this problem he propounded a whole theory to us about how «a party should be built and advance» and went on immediately to speak about the need for a «chairman» (allegedly he presented the problem in principle) who should be very knowledgeable, «should have Marxism at his fingertips» and be capable of manoeuvring in any situation!

Thus, he twisted the problem in such a way that Koçi

broke out in a cold sweat. The two partners in the plot were already trying to draw each other's teeth. We who knew nothing about what had been hatched up behind our backs, could not understand the sudden antagonism which emerged between them, but they themselves each sensed the threat of the other.

Thus, Sejfulla was for a «party chief», knowledgeable and of a high level, for a theoretician, and here he had himself in mind. Koçi was for a «proletarian» without much «chatter» and «theory», but «a person with discipline»! And here he had himself in mind.

The aims of each of them, put forward as if in «principle» at Berat, were to burst out a little later in a fierce quarrel, in a tooth-and-nail fight for power between the two.

Equally implicated with them in the plot at Berat was Nako, and Koçi's views about the «proletarianization» of the leadership of the Party and about the «intellectual élite» were bound to conflict with the views of Nako as the intellectual he was. Later we were to see that endless mutual quarrels and accusations were to break out between them, too.

As became clear later, the plot of Berat bore the seeds of internal contradictions and struggle for the plotters themselves.

The problem of «cadres» was Koçi Xoxe's other weapon to attack the former line of the Party. According to him the Party had done «little or nothing» to promote cadres, and the existing cadres were, according to him, either «unsound intellectuals» or «incompetent» in work and in war. According to Koçi the work of the Party with cadres must be radically changed, a reorganization must be carried out, concrete measures must be taken, etc., etc. There for the first time we heard the declension of the noun «kadrovik»* in all its cases. According to Koçi, a «trusted» person must be appointed everywhere for the work with cadres and he should have a monopoly of it. From the party cells at the base up to the centre, the «kadroviks» would be linked with one another in

* Official in charge of cadres.

a hierarchy up to the topmost level, the main «kadrovik» of the CC. This would be Koçi Xoxe, for the time being as organizational secretary of the Party and «in charge» of the work of security!

The aim was very subtle and, like the term «kadrovik», the whole system of the «selection and promotion» of cadres was not the «product» of the shallow mind of Koçi Xoxe. No, someone had dictated it to him, someone had taught him. Very soon it was to emerge that this was the work of the Yugoslav «friends».

Seeing that it was impossible for Koçi to take the place of the General Secretary of the Party at Berat, they elaborated the scheme of cadres and of kadroviks. Koçi, as organizational secretary, was to take the monopoly of cadres into his hands. By also taking over the tasks of minister of internal affairs according to the Yugoslav «model», Koçi would be able more easily to reject the former line on cadres as «wrong», would put the security force above the Party and would have a free hand to begin the purges and the replacing of cadres with those who would serve the plans of his and his masters. This would enable them to create the conditions to remove the General Secretary and Koçi would take power in a terrain long prepared.

Such was the «invisible» plan, all the threads of which contrived behind the scenes were to be brought to light by subsequent events and circumstances.

From many viewpoints Koçi's report ought to be called the «not report!»:

«The Party did *not* have a correct, organized line, was *not* in order, the Front did *not* work, the councils did *not* function, the Youth were *not* led, the people were *not* awakened, the women were *not* organized, the councils did *not* enjoy authority, did *not* enjoy sympathy, did *not* play their role, did *not* and did *not*...»

After rejecting all our work and sacrifices, Koçi saw fit to place before us the experience of the Yugoslavs.

He praised Tito, Tempo and Stojnić to the skies as «mo-

dels of justice», as «our saviours», praised to the skies their experience which «we must adopt as quickly as possible», and he continued:

«Those things which have not been done here, the Party and councils in Yugoslavia are doing...» After going on and on about this «experience», he ended up:

«That is the great difference which exists between our councils and those in Yugoslavia!»

What was the reason, according to Xoxe, that the councils of our country «had not gone well»? It came as a shock to hear him, but this is what he said:

«As a result of the sectarian line of the Party, the national liberation councils are looked on as party cells. In this way, as we have proceeded,» he concluded, «there is a danger that state power will remain in the hands of the Party.»

Such absurdities seem truly unbelievable but we heard all this at Berat.

While rejecting everything, Koçi Xoxe tried to produce some «theoretical» argument in his report and in one instance even brought up the experience of the Russian revolution of 1905! This astounded us. Koçi, who did not even know the first thing about the October Revolution was now telling us about that of 1905?!

The truth is that someone had dictated the report to him. This was self-evident from the absolute negation of everything, a negation which could not have emerged from the stupid head of Koçi alone. This was obvious also from its wording. Koçi Xoxe's Albanian was hard to understand. In fact, it was a translation from a Serbian text, a bad translation in which arrogance and the desire to dictate were apparent in every two to three words. This could not be the arrogance of one person, even the most negative person, such as Koçi was in reality, it was the arrogance of a group, of a bigger force. As to what this force was, at that time I could only suspect that the hand of Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević was behind it. But I was even more convinced that someone else had dictated to Koçi while he

scribbled those 15-20 pages when I noticed that in their euphoria and haste to attack everything, the secret authors and their tool, Koçi Xoxe, had overlooked self-exposing phrases. When he was speaking about the Party, its role in the war and the need for a «more prudent policy» of the Party in the Front, Koçi read the following phrase:

«The Party must not emerge in the forefront and you should not worry that you might suffer damage. In this war, you have built up great authority and this authority cannot easily be lost...»

Even I blushed when I heard this and after Koçi Xoxe finished reading and sat down, I turned back the pages of his report to the relevant place and asked him:

«Who do you imply by 'You'? To whom were you speaking at this point?»

Koçi's face went red. «You..., that is, we, the Party, the leadership.»

«Oh, wel!» I said in a sarcastic tone. «Why, from what position are you speaking to us, from outside the Party?»

«It was just a slip,» he said shaken. «See, a bit further down I say 'we must...'»

«Clear, clear,» I said and laid the pages on the table.

«What do you mean, 'clear'? he asked.

«I mean you have made the matter clear to me,» I replied curtly.

«No,» he said, «I'm afraid you might misunderstand me. In fact, I'll cross this piece out.» And I saw him put a stroke of his pen right across the page. Indeed, he thanked me for the attention I had paid when he was reading!

After two reports, as I said, many of the comrades, some of them worked on and deliberately put in support of Koçi, Nako and Sejfulla, and some others misinformed and deceived, asked scores of questions, seeking clarification of the problems presented. Confusion and disorientation pervaded the whole Plenum. It is interesting to note that very good comrades, like Gogo Nushi, for example, concerned about the situation created, but with communist honesty, threw light in the

Plenum on what had been done behind the scenes. Right from the outset Gogo said:

«Up until the Plenum at Helmës we had an extraordinary sympathy for the comrades of the leadership and for Miladin Popović, while from the report it turns out that they have hindered us.

«Then why this completely unexpected turn?» Gogo explained this there and then:

«From the Congress of Përmet on, every time I have talked to Nako he has said that 'things are not going well'. A few days ago, Nako told me: 'I had understood the mistakes but had said nothing because I was afraid'».

So this is what had gone on! Nako, Koçi and Sejfulla had not been content with their pressure and accusations exerted in a «narrow» circle, in the Bureau, but had worked on the others, too. There and then a series of suspicions arose in my mind. What impelled Nako in his actions?! How did it come about that he began to tell Gogo that «things are not going well» in the autumn of 1944, on the eve of Liberation, and did not do this earlier? As is known, from January 1944 Nako was in Tirana, he had daily contact with Gogo and the two of them led the organization of the Party there and both of them were among the main cadres. Then why did this Nako, who claimed that he had «all those criticisms», tell Gogo about them now, on the eve of the Berat Plenum, and did not do this before, when they were working together?! The most elementary logic shows that Nako had not talked with Gogo earlier, because earlier, that is, before the summer, he had no criticism to make, had no differences either with the leadership of the Party or with me or with Miladin. As the impulsive and irritable type he was, he had no reason to keep his «criticisms» secret and save them up for the autumn of 1944. Automatically, my mind went to the Yugoslav «friend» who sat at the head of the table energetically taking notes. Once he arrived everything began to be turned upside down, especially after the «platform theses» which he presented at Odriçan.

After Gogo sat down, Nako got up again to make a «clarification»:

«It is true I have said those things to Gogo. My position has been unclear, but I had not seen matters with these eyes with which I see them today. This would have been to my credit, but it was not so. Comrade Stojnić opened our eyes. Now Gogo has raised here that I was afraid to speak out before. This is a misunderstanding. What I did tell him was that if I spoke out it would bring no result. I thought it would do more harm than good.»

The things Nako said on the many occasions when he spoke during the Berat Plenum constitute perhaps the most accurate reflection of his contradictory character. His whole stand there was more negative and hostile than on any other occasion previously or later.

This was that same Nako who, a little while earlier, wrote articles and letters in his incisive style and spoke to the youth with enthusiasm, as he had done no longer ago than August 1944 at the 1st Congress of the Anti-fascist Youth Union of Albania at Helmës. All his present «negations» until a few months ago had been affirmations, given unreservedly about the correct line which our Party had followed on all problems — in regard to the councils, the Front, the Women's organization, the Youth organization, the organization of the Party itself and its leadership, etc. This he did because he based himself on the reality which he knew well, on deeds, on events, and on people who were his comrades. Now everything was turned upside down. That Nako who, until a few months ago, spoke and wrote with the greatest hatred about the Balli Kombëtar and reaction, about Abaz Kupi, and so on, had now lowered his bugle and it had faded right out. Astonishing, more than astonishing! Had I not known Nako intimately for years, I would have thought that he had spoken in the past from hypocrisy. But no! While he was speaking, the conviction grew on me that something had occurred with him, something profound had unexpec-

tedly made him go over to the other side. What was it? What was hidden behind Nako?

I was convinced that if Nako had ever been guilty of lying and deceit, this was precisely now, at Berat.

Another fact, too, shows what a living contradiction Nako Spiru was in himself and on what a filthy course he had set out. After denying, rejecting and distorting everything, suddenly, when he began to refer to the most recent facts and events, especially to the liberation of the country, the creation of the government, the tasks which emerged for us, etc., he «forgot himself» and became another Nako, the former Nako:

«The people,» he said, «have seen our Party as the banner-bearer of the war. We raised the people to their feet, we brought them to this point and now, through our work, the people have to see that the Party will be the main force of national unity after this, too. This is the issue. The main factor which set the people in movement has been our Party. The people achieved the victory in the National Liberation War because they had our Party at the head. We are in leading positions, we are in command. Now the thing is that we must hold on to these positions. New situations have been created, hence we must remain in these positions and strengthen them.»

This was one Nako. Another Nako got up in the Plenum of Berat. Right from the outset, in the Plenum, as a member of the plot, he vented his spleen, made many accusations, threw mud at the Party and its leadership and at his own work and efforts in the bloody years of the war. And even while he spoke, while he continued with his accusations, from time to time, unconsciously, when he was referring to facts, the situation and the tasks which emerged, he unwittingly «divested himself» of the dirty role of conspirator and came out in opposition to himself, to what he had just said.

As I mentioned, one of the most mature and balanced contributions to the discussion at the Plenum was that of Comrade Hysni Kapo. Naturally, Hysni could not come out openly against that spirit which, you might say, was the

«official» predominant spirit in the Plenum, but he did not come out in favour of it as many others did, consciously or unconsciously.

When he spoke about the work of the Party in the Vlora region, Hysni concentrated on the flagrant mistakes of Liri Gega and Dušan Mugoša.

«Liri's sectarianism and the monopolization of the work by her and Dušan Mugoša,» said Hysni, among other things, «were flagrant and we have had many problems and contradictions with them. We have informed the leadership of the Party about these things and on no occasion have the comrades of the leadership said that we were not right. On the contrary, when the cup was full, the leadership of the Party removed both Liri and Dušan from the regional committee of Vlora.»

Hence, Hysni's contribution proved that neither our line nor our directives were «sectarian», but that the actions of individual persons had been sectarian. This could not be pleasing to Stojnić and company, so Sejfulla Malëshova got up and wanted to «catch» Hysni Kapo out in what he said:

«I have two questions for Hysni,» he said in his doctoral tone, «first, if after the Winter Offensive we had not had a sectarian stand towards Skënder Muço, do you think he and his men would have come over to us?»

Hysni gave him a clear-cut answer: «Skënder Muço clearly understood the aim of our war, he was opposed to the line of the Communist Party and that is why he did not come over to us and never would. But,» added Hysni with clever sarcasm, «with the spirit in which this discussion is taking place, he might have come...»

«My second question is this,» continued Sejfulla discomfited: «Did the directive, which the Central Committee issued at the 1st National Conference for the condemnation of Xhepi¹, cause harm?»

1 Sadik Premte, former vice-chairman of the «Youth» Group. Together with Anastas Lulo, former chairman of this group, he strove to hinder the creation of the Communist Party of Albania. Failing in this,

«Had we allowed Xhepi to do what he wanted, he would have done a great deal more harm to our work. Our mistake is that we had not sufficiently unmasked and attacked him earlier, even before the Conference,» replied Hysni.

At this Plenum Velimir Stojnić did not leave his work to be done only by the persons that he had prepared thoroughly for two or three months on end. During the whole meeting he sat there serious and frowning, but his face beamed and his eyes sparkled when Koçi, Sejfulla, Nako and others did their work in the way that the plan of Tito and the leadership of his party he had brought from Yugoslavia required. As soon as he saw that the discussion was taking a course which was not to his interest, however, he immediately intervened arrogantly.

This occurred for example when, after the allegations about the «sectarianism in line», the attack was concentrated on what was described by Koçi and Sejfulla as the «clique in the leadership». Velimir Stojnić was all satisfaction, anticipating that the attack would fall upon me, but the comrades of the Plenum did the opposite. They concentrated their attack on Liri Gega and immediately after her, on Dušan and Miladin. Velimir approved the attack on the latter with a nod of his head and the dose of the criticism was strengthened. As I said, Hysni made a very good portrayal of the sectarian and terrorist characteristics of Mugoša. Other comrades brought up further facts. Tuk Jakova thought that now it was a free-for-all and began to speak about Blažo Jovanović:

«Blažo contributed nothing at the 1st National Conference, because he had nothing to contribute,» said Tuk. «If we asked him something, he dodged it or did not open his mouth. Tempo came those days, too, and he told us nothing

later they continued their divisive activity. In June 1942 the Extraordinary Conference of the CPA expelled them from the ranks of the Party. In April-May 1943 he and some of his collaborators organized a dangerous faction in the Vlora region, which was crushed with the direct intervention of Comrade Enver Hoxha.

about how a Central Committee is organized, what the tasks of the Bureau, the Secretariat are, etc.»

Tuk spoke at length about these two and the truth is that what he said was correct. However, the naive mind of Tuk had understood nothing of what was going on. He had not understood that the task was not to attack the Yugoslav delegates, but that, in the first place, I had to be attacked, the other comrades of the leadership had to be attacked and, of the Yugoslavs, only one, Miladin Popović, had to be attacked. The others had to be praised. This is what the «spirit» of the Plenum required, but Tuk did not understand this, just as others did not understand it, either. From the facts the truth was emerging: the Yugoslav delegates had not brought us any benefit.

Velimir Stojnić stood up and in a brutal way tried to defend the «honour» of the Yugoslav delegates:

«This is not a Plenum about the work of our comrades,» said Stojnić sternly, «but about your work, the work of your main comrades. You should speak about them and not about Comrades Dušan, Blažo, Tempo or me.»

He intervened in this way both earlier in the Plenum and later, but he reserved most of his anti-Albanian spleen for the «message of greetings» which he delivered at the Plenum. In the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPA he behaved and spoke in such a tone as if he were in a meeting of a party cell of a battalion of the Yugoslav army.

His whole contribution consisted of the «platform» which he presented to us at Odrican, but now «further enriched» and with many things said more openly, more «boldly». Thinking that his purpose was virtually achieved, from his own mouth he brought out many facts which compromised him and proved that everything that was occurring had been hatched up by him.

From the outset he accused me because «I refused to call the Bureau of the Central Committee together» for the gentleman in question «to present his views». In fact, as I have said above, I did not consider it correct or in order for a foreign comrade to take part in the meeting of the Political

Bureau. It was a different matter with Miladin. We ourselves had asked him to come and he never imposed himself on us, never spoke in the tone that Velimir Stojnić used or acted as he did.

«Comrade Dizdarević and I,» he declared boastfully to the Plenum, «came from Yugoslavia with instructions that we should assist you in all questions of the Party, the army, the youth, the Front, etc. I came with a prepared plan and now I am presenting it to you. I know the situation here in detail. I have not sought to know it because I am inquisitive, or to interfere in your internal affairs, or to infringe the authority of anyone...»¹

So frequently did he «vow» that he «was not interfering», that he «was not lowering the prestige of anybody», etc., that the repetition of such declarations over and over again implied that he had come precisely for this sinister work.

He «reported» openly to the Plenum his dissatisfaction with Miladin and me, stressed that «when we came, your comrades disregarded us and maintained contacts more with Miladin than with me, who came in the capacity of the instructor of the CC of the CPY,» that «we quarrelled over many issues,» that «the stand of Miladin made my work and meeting with comrades difficult, therefore I demanded his withdrawal from Albania,» etc., etc.

«The work amongst the youth has changed,» continued Velimir Stojnić. «Comrade Dizdarević quickly found a common language with the comrades of the youth and has proceeded in complete accord with them.»² In the Party, however, he complained, «I could make no progress. It was hard to make headway. Thus, all my efforts to take the situation in hand quickly went for nothing. Only after the meeting of the Bureau (he was referring to the meeting at Odričan), where

1 From the minutes of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA in Berat, pp. 62-63. CAP.

2 At that time Nako Spiru was secretary of the CC of the Communist Youth and president of the Anti-fascist Youth Union of Albania.

it was agreed that I should take part, matters started to get under way properly! At that meeting I put forward a number of directives which I'm presenting to you here.»

What these «directives» were we already know. But why did Stojnić consider it «reasonable» to repeat them once again, one by one, in front of all the comrades of the Plenum?!

Perhaps I am mistaken, but I have always thought that Stojnić, as a conceited person and none too intelligent, considered that he had achieved everything he wanted, that our Party had been subjugated, and now he ought to tell the whole Central Committee that the true author of all this change, «the hero of the change», was not the group of gallants — Nako Spiru, Sejfulla Malëshova, Koçi Xoxe and others, but Velimir Stojnić himself.

«The thing was,» he said in his discourse, «that the leadership of your Party had to be shaken up to this situation until it could achieve a meeting like this. Your Party was incapable of doing this shaking up itself. This required a force from outside and this force has come here with us!»¹

The monstrosities of this person were incredible.

Supporting Sejfulla Malëshova's accusation that we had allegedly «lost the heart of the communist», Stojnić went even further and «instructed» us:

«The head of the man is not like the head of a rooster on the block. The head of the man has a great role. It is born and dies only once.»

In my book of memoirs «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania» I have spoken about the attempts of the British to bring about a «reconciliation» or a «reuniting» of the National Liberation Front with the agent of the British Abaz Kupi in the last period of the National Liberation War², as well as

1 From the minutes of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA in Berat, p. 66. CAP.

2 See Enver Hoxha, «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania» (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, pp. 260-261 and 267-278, Eng. ed.

about the hostile aims that were hidden behind these attempts. After the British got nowhere with us, they chose Tito as the «intermediary» to bring about this reunion. It is known that they conducted many negotiations with Velebit, the representative of the Yugoslav staff attached to the Allied Headquarters in Cairo, so that he would transmit the request of the British to Tito.¹

What was discussed and achieved in these negotiations between Tito and the British I do not know, but one thing is indisputable: as soon as Velimir Stojnić arrived in Albania he put pressure on us to display «prudence» and accept reconciliation with Abaz Kupa and his men, because otherwise the «unity» of the people would be damaged and «civil war» would break out. At that time the British, too, had presented the same demand for the same «reasons»! This was not just a coincidence. Tito had accepted the role of intermediary, a role which willy-nilly put him on the same footing as those who wanted to sabotage our National Liberation War and put the victories achieved at the cost of bloodshed into the hands of reaction.

Hence, Stojnić carried out the instruction of Tito and the British as soon as he arrived, but while his demand was lost in the course of the discussion at Odrriçan (we did not keep minutes of the discussions there), as though to enrich the documentation for the future, he raised the problem at Berat, too, so that it would be recorded into the minutes. His words at Berat, both on this problem and about everything else that he said, are down in black and white. He said:

«Your line with Bazi i Canës has not been correct. This line was not in favour of the broad unity of the masses, but has brought division and, as is known, division means civil war!»

1 «... (3) that we should get Tito (through Brigadier Maclean) to influence L.N.C. to agree to return of Abas Kupa...» The same was pointed out later too, in a letter which said, «...getting Tito to use his influence with the L.N.C. at the same time. (See the complete notes in the book: Enver Hoxha, «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, p. 273, 262, Eng. ed.)

And who was «criticizing» and «advising» us about «a line in favour of the unity of the masses» and about avoiding causing «civil war»?! Precisely those who in their own country, especially in Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia, were pursuing a profoundly wrong anti-popular policy of oppression and division.

I mentioned above our action in sending some units of our army to assist in the liberation of Kosova and the peoples of Yugoslavia in the hot pursuit of the nazi beast.

The entry of our forces into Kosova once again confirmed the patriotic vitality and undaunted revolutionary spirit of the people of Kosova. What the Tempos and others had been deliberately saying for years on end about the people of Kosova describing them as «linked with reaction» was quickly refuted. From valiant Kosova, especially after the entry of our forces, 53 000 young men and women filled the ranks of the brigades of the National Liberation Army of Albania and those of Kosova. Although young partisans, they distinguished themselves for their bravery in the war against the nazi-fascists, just like the older partisans. The entry of our brigades brought about that the state power of the national liberation councils, comprised of the finest patriotic sons of Kosova, was extended over the whole province.

However, precisely when the whole of Kosova had turned into a hotbed of the National Liberation War, suddenly an order came from Tito's staff that the partisan forces of Albania and those of Kosova should leave Kosova and pursue the nazi enemy «to the north» of Kosova, deep into Yugoslavia. Our forces carried out this order, because they had gone there to pursue fascism until the complete liberation of the peoples of Yugoslavia. But later we were to learn that the purpose of Tito's order about «the pursuit of the enemy in depth» was nothing but an almost precise repetition of that trickery which the kraljs and princes had tried to carry through in the past in the fight against the Ottoman yoke. Especially when they saw clearly that the Ottoman forces were being routed and Albania was on the eve of independ-

ence the kraljs of Serbia and the princes of Montenegro left nothing undone so that the Albanian insurgent forces should leave Kosova which was liberated and engage themselves as long as possible in the pursuit of the Ottoman forces in other regions «to the south». Their aim was that the Serbo-Montenegrin armies could occupy Kosova and other Albanian regions without meeting the resistance of the Albanian insurgent forces, or even of the Ottoman occupation forces. This is precisely what Tito was doing in 1945. The Titoite forces entered Kosova, liberated by the forces of our army and the Kosova forces, in order to eliminate the national liberation councils that had been set up and to launch the unrestrained mass terror against the Albanians. These unprecedented reprisals of the Titoites quite rightly caused a great popular revolt which put the «new Yugoslavia» in doubt, because the people of Kosova were not seeing any difference from what they had suffered under the «old Yugoslavia». In this extremely difficult situation the patriotic people of Kosova demanded «the return of the Albanian partisans», with the aim that the situation should be resolved justly and the savage terror stopped. In order to avoid the further complication of the situation Tito and company were obliged to agree to this demand, and the partisans returned. No kind of «organized reactionary» forces, such as the Yugoslav propaganda talked of, were found in Kosova, but a people who welcomed our partisans exactly as if they were carrying out a second liberation of Kosova. Calm was re-established and after this Tito planned new manoeuvres. Now that the war was over, in the new situation he could solve the acute problems in Kosova with his own forces. However, in order to do this, far from the eyes of the world, and especially far from our eyes, it was necessary that our forces should be finally withdrawn from Kosova and return to Albania. But how? The direct withdrawal of our forces from Kosova over the then state borders would create unpleasant, perhaps grave, scenes for the Titoites. The people of Kosova might rise in revolt again when they saw that the forces of our army

were withdrawing. To overcome this situation Tito again copied the *kraljs* of the past and staged «the need to pursue reactionary bands towards the south, towards Greece» and for this he sought the «aid» of those forces of ours which were there. We, who still did not understand Tito's filthy plans, ordered our divisions to act. After they reached the southernmost borders of Macedonia our forces were told that «there was no further need» for them to stay in Yugoslavia! The border was crossed in the zone of Korça and Prespa, far from the eyes of the people of Kosova. Tito and Ranković were left free to operate, as they did, with their barbarous methods against martyred Kosova.

These, then, were the people who were «advising» us on a «correct» line which would lead to «the unity of the masses». Those who, with their policy, were carrying out and planning to deepen the line of genocide and mass extermination in Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia.

But let us go on with Stojnić's «address» at the Berat Plenum.

After he threw mud on all our work and successes, after he «scared» us, claiming that our «positions in the terrain and the army» were not strong, he did not forget also to teach us a series of other «lessons» for the future.

«Don't deceive yourselves,» he said, «that you have strong positions. You must bear in mind, amongst other things, that you are threatened by the overthrown bourgeoisie, but you are also in great danger from the external enemies. You must understand,» he threatened, «that you are small and constitute no more than an easy prey for reaction.»

After dwelling at length on the «theory of the danger» he came to the point he had been told to make:

«What I mean is,» he said, «that you cannot go ahead without Yugoslavia and, in particular, without the Yugoslavia such as this which now has been created in the Balkans and in Europe. This is a question of the strongest possible relations with us, of whole-hearted links with Yugoslavia,» continued Stojnić.

Later I shall speak more extensively about the all-round hostile efforts of the Titoite leadership to realize its ultimate aim: the gobbling up of the whole of Albania. In 1947 and the beginning of 1948, in particular, this aim was proclaimed openly, but I want to say that as early as the Berat Plenum Stojnić launched the idea of this gobbling up as a *ballon d'essai**:

«As to the form in which our relations should be strengthened,» he said, «we cannot tell at this Conference. But let us keep before us the prospect of an alliance, a confederation, or even more. Build your relations with Yugoslavia to this perspective,» he dictated. «The perspective of Yugoslavia is the perspective of the Balkans and Europe. The name of Tito has gone beyond the borders of Yugoslavia and you must popularize it, too. My opinion is,» he said concluding this question, «that you speak very little about us, therefore in the future you ought to speak more about Yugoslavia and Tito».

That was not the place, nor were the conditions suitable, to enter into discussion and seek clarification about what Stojnić meant with this «confederation, or even more» and how this Yugoslavia had become «the perspective of the Balkans and Europe». Everything would be made clear later. At Berat the «ideas» and «directives» which Stojnić had brought from Yugoslavia were only thrown in; separately or all together, they constituted time-bombs with incalculable dangers for the future of our Party and the new Albania. They were all political and ideological time-bombs and bore the Titoite brand. It was still too early for us to be able to understand the full extent of their danger. But at those troubled moments their clocks began to tick as a great menace. In order to give us no opportunity to think at greater length about the essence of his declarations about Yugoslavia and the alliances, however, Stojnić made a complete about-turn and came back to what was the main thing for the moment:

«Here you made your criticism of the Central Committee,

* test balloon (French in the original).

but it should have been stronger and more profound, especially the self-criticism. You must take this criticism in the same spirit down to the base, too, so that the whole Party will be orientated correctly...»

In broad outline this was the whole content of the Plenum which was being held in Berat when the capital, Tirana, had just been liberated and the liberation of the whole of Albania was expected hour by hour.

Regrettably, even in this crucial situation and these conditions, most of the aims of the «Stojnić mission» were achieved. A great deal of mud was thrown at our Party and its correct line in crooked ways and with profoundly hostile methods. The unity in the leadership of the Party, especially in the Bureau of the Central Committee, was attacked and severely damaged. Besides Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo it was decided that two other «Sejfullas» — Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova, should be added to the Bureau and it was proposed that later Kristo Themelko should join the Bureau, too, if «necessary»! In the book «When the Party Was Born» I have spoken about who they were and what they did during the war, and later I shall speak about what they did after the war, too. Here we are dealing with the «fruits» of Berat. Nevertheless, one of the main aims of Stojnić and his agents was not achieved at Berat: they were unable to eliminate me from the leadership of the Party and as General Secretary. Although the comrades of the Plenum were disorientated and accepted many unjust accusations, the fact is that they supported the correct general line of the Party, and towards me expressed what they felt: affection, respect and trust. Nevertheless, my authority, not as a person, but as General Secretary of the Party, was diminished by all the poison that the Stojnić gang spewed out. I myself saw and felt this more than anyone. But I did not hang my head. Even when the filthiest things were said, I was convinced that we had a correct line and had the unshakeable conviction that eventually everything would be cleared up and put right. Above all I had the communist conviction that, however things went,

I would be able to stand close to the Party and the people, and leave it to them to give their final correct judgment about everything.

However, the bitterest and most damaging «fruit» of the Berat Plenum was the orientation given there for the future: since «sectarianism» was described as the «greatest evil» and the «greatest danger» for our Party, opportunism was given the green light.

This was the main reason why the attack on the alleged opportunism in the line was passed over lightly at the Plenum, without going into it deeply with arguments. Everything had been well calculated by Tito's staff. The accusation about «opportunism» was thrown in just to «prove» that our Party was allegedly incapable of defining a correct and consistent line and, then this accusation had no further value for the accusers. After all, they were not really concerned either about opportunism or about sectarianism. They were concerned with the subjugation of our Party and of Albania to Yugoslavia. Therefore, we should not be «sectarian», but «docile», «obedient», «humble», «generous» up to the point of sacrificing our freedom and selling out Albania! This was the aim of the «Stojnić mission» and, regrettably, it succeeded in preparing the ground for this.

In particular, Stojnić's «directives» about the future policy of the Party in the Front, the national liberation councils and the organs of state power, in the field of the economy, in foreign policy, etc., constituted that infected anti-socialist mire in which Sejfulla Malëshova and company would try to immerse the new Albania immediately after Liberation.

We had had long bitter arguments over these problems, too, for two to three months on end and in one way or another they were included in the reports delivered at the Plenum, but more particularly in some of the contributions to the discussion. I spoke above about the report which I was compelled to read at the Plenum and the open contradictions I had with the comrades over the majority of the matters which they insisted should be «added» or «corrected», but I want to point out that my opposition was not entirely in vain. In «compensa-

tion,» Nako, Koçi, Sejfulla, and others, headed by Stojnić, were obliged to «agree» that some of my correct views and stands should be left in the report. I emphasized these stands with even greater force also in a contribution I made shortly before the closing of the Plenum.

In regard to the policy of the Party in the Front, for example, after speaking about the new situation created in the country as a result of decisive victories in the war, amongst other things I stressed:

«We must guard against both the open enemies and the secret enemies. Now that everybody sees that the victory is ours, even the open and declared enemies are trying to link up with the secret enemies and, through them, to get into the Front. Up till yesterday they fought from outside, now they want to fight from inside. However, now it is too late, because our doors are closed to them. The call which we made some time ago to elements who remained on the side of the occupier, was the final appeal. All those who want to avoid their responsibility for the three or four years that they have fought us with arms and every other means, now want to get into the Front. It is our duty,» I stressed, «to refuse to admit to the Front those who want to undermine it from within.»

This stand clashed with the view of Sejfulla Malëshova that «if the doors are closed, the Front becomes narrow», therefore, without attacking Sejfulla by name, I asked the direct question:

«Does this mean that with this line which we shall follow the Front becomes narrow? No,» I stressed, «the Front does not become narrow, it will be enlarged with all those elements who, up till now, have stood aside or have been misled by the traitors but who have not stained their hands with blood.»

Likewise, both in the report and in my final contribution, I dealt in general outline with some of the future tasks of the Front as a big political organization in which all the masses would be rallied under the leadership of the CPA.

«The tasks of state power which the Front has carried out hitherto, will be performed from now on by the councils

which,» I stressed, «we must ceaselessly strengthen and enliven. The Front must strengthen the alliance of workers, peasants, intellectuals and all other strata.

«The question of state power,» I continued «is the central question for the Party, and this not only because it is a current problem facing us, but also because we lack experience in this field. We must strengthen the councils, must purge them of alien elements who have been admitted in error or through machinations, must ensure that the people have complete confidence in the councils and regard them as their own organs of state power.»

However, although the plotters were obliged to «permit me» to present these views, in their contributions they attacked them openly and directly. Thus, when Sejfulla Malëshova spoke, amongst other things, he stressed:

«The time has come for us to open the doors of the Front and to extend it further. Even in Yugoslavia, where there has always been a correct policy on the Front, now the doors are being opened to all, and this is even more necessary in our country where sectarian mistakes have been made. Not only should we extend the Front,» he stressed, «but we should win over those we have lost. Hence, we should accept even those whom we were unable to win during the war»!

Koçi, Pandi, Bedri Spahiu and, up to a point, Nako Spiru also spoke in this spirit and on the same lines. The ground was being prepared, for the admission to the Front of the Cen Elezis and Co. The seeds of those evils with which we would have to battle later were being sown in the ranks of the Party.

Another «directive» of Stojnić which was to cause us many problems and a great deal of work in the future, was that on the stand of our new state towards the allies.

All throughout the war, we had a correct line in this direction and, while recognizing the three «great Allies», we made the necessary differentiation between the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the USA and Britain on the other.

At that time, we were still in ignorance of the secret

and open contacts and negotiations of Tito with the two Western Allies, especially with Churchill, but we noticed something when, in one of the debates before the Plenum, Velimir Stojnić said:

«Today you are a state with an official policy. The great Allies which played a decisive role in this war, should all be looked on in the same way by the new state...»

«How?» I asked. «By putting the Soviet Union on the same footing with the other two?»

«From the state viewpoint, yes,» Stojnić explained to me. «The policy of a true state makes no differentiation. You don't know these things but you'll learn them. Naturally,» he added, «in an unofficial way, for example, through party channels, the Soviet Union can be considered as the main and most natural ally, but not through state channels. America and Britain are always allies, and their present policy is positive and in our own interests.»

Such reasoning seemed to me astonishing and deep within myself I did not agree. How could the policy of the state be different from the line and policy of the party? Another fact made an even greater impression on me. When Velimir Stojnić told me to stress the special role of the Soviet Union «in an unofficial way», he immediately added:

«Here account should be taken of the concrete special features of the war of each country. For example, the true ally of all of us is the Soviet Union, but you, as Albania, have had and still have, you might say...», he mumbled, «a special, true ally in the Yugoslavia of Tito».

Later the comrades presented these views, too, to me as «their own», we had other argument, and in one way or the other they found their reflection in the Plenum. However, proceeding from the fact that the report was to be delivered to the Party, I took the opportunity and stressed forcefully:

«The Soviet Union, as the first socialist state and through the heroic anti-fascist war which it is waging, is the greatest guarantee for the liberation and the independence of the peoples. Hence, we must implant in the consciousness of the

masses the truth that our most sincere ally and the main supporter of our foreign policy is the Soviet Union.»

Likewise, utilizing my right to make the closing speech, I said to the comrades:

«We are on the eve of the complete liberation of Albania, we are facing tasks of great importance, and we have no reason to hide our Party, which has been the true leadership of the liberation war, behind the Front. It must be made stronger, more wide awake and more active than ever at the head of the masses, with the reins of command in its hands and, through a correct stand and line properly applied, accomplish its own program and realize the aspirations of the working people.

«At this great turning point in the history of our people, we must increase our energies and political perspicacity tenfold, must at the same time confront the Central Committee and the whole Party with the past and future reality, must point out the successes and the mistakes, teach the Party not to become dizzy with success and to learn from its mistakes.»

Thus the Berat Plenum came to an end. The following day we were to enter Tirana. The whole of Albania was liberated, the immediate task which our Party had put in its program when it was founded on November 8, 1941, had been accomplished with success. These were days when our joy and happiness ought to have been greater than ever. And in fact these feelings were seething in the hearts, the faces and eyes of the people, were expressed openly, and burst out wherever we went during those days. I and the other comrades of the leadership of the Party, all the communists, all the fighters of our heroic partisan army were in the midst of this joy.

However, I cannot hide that, apart from the great joy that we had achieved victory, a great and unpleasant worry about the things that had happened at Berat was gnawing away at my consciousness. It seemed to me that somewhere another great danger for the future was lurking. It was not at all a worry about my future as a person. From the first day

when I consciously set out on the road of communism I had taken everything into account — the sufferings, hardships, sacrifices, my whole life. I had dedicated them all to the great cause of the people, the Homeland, the Party and the revolution. My concern was solely about the cause of the Party upon which a great deal of mud was being flung unjustly, about its future and the future of the people and the country which it was to lead.

All that gigantic war had been fought and crowned with success and to jeopardize all this now with our own hands would be a disgrace and a grave crime! This would be the most unpardonable crime committed at the expense of this people. This must never be allowed to occur.

Within myself I swore that I would do everything in my power to establish the truth, to ensure that the Party continued on the right course and that Albania would advance on the road which the CPA had promised in November 1941.

III

TITO'S SECRET AGENCY IN ACTION

Belgrade sent the Albanian-speaking Titoite Josip Djerdja in place of Stojnić ■ The 7th Cabinet for... Albania in the chancellery of the Yugoslav Federation ■ Why is Tito «against» the partitioning of Albania?! ■ The truth on the Pijade-Tsaldaris negotiations in August 1946 ■ A «joke» between Tito and King Paul about the dividing up of Albania ■ Debate on the policy of elections to the Constituent Assembly; S. Malëshova: «We must allow the opposition freedom to take part in the elections independently»; K. Xoxe: «The Yugoslav comrades were not afraid to reach agreement even with the bourgeois»; N. Spiru: «We have no reason to fear our opponents now»; The people: «We prefer not to vote at all rather than vote for the reactionaries.» ■ Quarrels break out between the plotters themselves ■ The 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in February 1946 ■ The theses for the re-examination of the Berat Plenum ■ Belgrade helping its own agents.

The new historical stage, which our Party and country were entering immediately after Liberation and the establishment of the people's state power, also marks the transition to a new phase in our relations with the CPY and the Yugoslav state.

Now, in both countries our parties were parties in power. Upon them devolved the onerous and noble duty to exert all their strength and abilities both to carry the respective coun-

tries and peoples to new victories and to strengthen and develop the reciprocal relations and links between them.

The special difficulties, circumstances and conditions of the time of the war were over. For our part, we found in those conditions and difficulties, understandable in war time, the main justification for why the direct links with the CPY and especially with its leadership during the past four years had remained restricted to some intermittent steps which had not left us with good impressions but, on the contrary, had disappointed us. However, we still regarded these as isolated instances and did not blame the leadership of the CPY for them. Hence, we continued to retain a good, to some extent even euphoric, opinion about the Yugoslav party and its main leadership, even though for four years we had no possibility to know them concretely at first hand. Now the time had come for each of us to assess the other on the basis of real knowledge of the work, facts, and line which each pursued, and no longer through «idealist» judgments, as in the past. The time had come for practice to eliminate any lingering doubt which had remained with us as a result of the restricted and unpleasant contacts of the past, just as any doubt or bad opinion which the Yugoslav leadership might have formed about us on the basis of the reports which its delegates sent, should also be dispelled. Thus, we were ready and predisposed to develop and strengthen to the maximum our friendly relations with the CPY and the peoples of Yugoslavia, being guided in every step by the Marxist-Leninist principles on the relations between fraternal parties and countries. What would the future tell us?!

«Defence» de jure in order to gobble up Albania de facto

The first year of Liberation and indeed the greater part of 1946 in many directions indicated an «Indian summer» in our relations with the Yugoslav «friends». It seemed as if many

of their former stands were changing, as if there was an improvement in the grave atmosphere of carping criticism of the past, even as if they were reconsidering some of their unjust stands of the past.

Even Colonel Stojnić, after all the chaos and confusion he had caused us at Berat, began to make approaches to me.

However, what had occurred at Berat hung over us like a black cloud which had not been swept away. On the contrary, its evil effect, great or small, was felt on our work every day.

I said this to Stojnić during one of the many visits he started to pay me after we were settled in Tirana, stressing that for the time being we were seeing only negative effects from the Plenum of Berat.

«As soon as passions have cooled, you will see that everything will change,» he tried to pacify me. «At Berat the comrades learned how to make criticism and self-criticism. This is very valuable both for today and for the future.»

«Except that I have the impression that the criticism was made by throwing mud at the prestige of the Party, its leadership and me,» I told him.

«Please, understand me correctly,» he replied. «Neither I nor your comrades ever had any intention of disparaging the personality of your Party or even less of you personally. You yourself saw that the comrades of the Bureau never had anything directly against you. On the contrary, they are happy that you are General Secretary of the Party!»

«The Party has elected me to the functions I hold, not one or even five persons,» I said with marked coldness. «Likewise, whether or not I am to retain these functions was not and will not be a matter for a few individuals, whoever they may be. Above all we have the Party.»

«Quite right,» said Stojnić and, pretending not to understand what I was driving at, he went on to flatter me: «It is an honour for us to have a friend like you,» etc., etc.

I have never liked flattery and when occasionally someone has flattered me directly, I have tried to divine what was

hidden behind the flattery and the flatterer. This is what occurred on this occasion with Velimir Stojnić. But he spoke with such an innocent appearance that I found it difficult to understand what had brought about this sudden change in him. Perhaps, I thought, he has sent the Yugoslav leadership a report on what occurred at Berat and Tito has tweaked his ear. Perhaps Velimir himself senses that instead of assisting us with his «theses» he did a lot of harm and now wants to smooth things over with me. Maybe he thinks that in some article or official meeting in the future I might report to Tito about the mess at Berat and, to forestall the consequences, he is trying to behave in a friendly way with me.

At the same time I noticed that Stojnić continued to maintain good relations with the other comrades, frequently invited all of us together to the premises of the Yugoslav mission and missed no opportunity to visit us even just to say, «Hello! How are you getting on?» I thought that this, too, came within the context of his efforts to undo some of the harm he had done in the past, especially in the period from the end of August to the end of November 1944. Up till the moment he departed from Albania (as far as I remember, about the end of 1945), he became mostly a distributor of invitations and proposals for us to send the maximum number of individual comrades and groups of comrades of different sectors to Belgrade for «experience».

Nevertheless, I had no use for him at all. Any value he might have had (in fact he had none) he had destroyed once and for all at Berat and now, whether or not he was in Albania, whether he smiled or frowned, these things had no importance at all. I have the belief that Tito and Co. sensed this opinion and quickly withdrew him from Albania. In his place came another Titoite, Josip Djerdja, with whom another long and bitter history would link us. He was a diplomat of Albanian origin, from a village in Dalmatia, and he spoke Albanian freely. His grandfather, if I am not mistaken, had been regent of the Serb or Croat monarchy.

Josip Djerdja was a clever, cunning fellow. He adopted a «popular» pose, approached anybody at all, and in this direction the language helped him, and did a sophisticated job of gathering information for Belgrade. He tried to be correct and friendly with me, made efforts to eliminate the bad impression that Velimir Stojnić and many others had made on me, showed himself «accomodating» and with tendencies to advance the work without any further bitterness. Hence, at first Djerdja was sweet-spoken and a real «expert» on all matters. In a note of five or six lines, Tito himself introduced him to us as a trained cadre who would be ready to help us. At one of the first meetings I had with this new Yugoslav representative, he referred to Stojnić.

«The comrades tweaked his ear a bit over some lack of tact in his relations with you,» he told me «in confidence», «but you must understand he was inclined more to military methods because that was his profession.»

«It was not simply a lack of tact,» I replied to this Albanian-speaking Yugoslav. «A whole history came about and is still continuing as a result of the 'criticisms' which Colonel Stojnić presented to us.»

«Your comrades have misunderstood him. As friends and communists we may make mutual criticisms, but this does not mean that they should be accepted unreservedly.»

«That is right, but your comrade insisted not only that they should be accepted, but also that they should be made more 'profound'.»

«Perhaps, perhaps,» said Djerdja, «but I have come with the idea that it is better if we don't hark back to the past. At that time the conditions were such that it was more difficult to know the situations and the problems. The main thing is that now we should march forward shoulder to shoulder like friends and brothers.»

Meanwhile, other messages of friendship continued to come from Belgrade. Our comrades from various sectors began to come and go back and forth to Yugoslavia and those who met them, especially the officials of the Party, welcomed

them with friendly words and missed no opportunity to send me greetings and «assurances» that the «friendship» between our two parties and countries «will be strengthened», that «Belgrade will always have its doors open for you», etc.

All these things, taken as a whole, could not fail to warm our hearts and please us. We ourselves were interested in strengthening our mutual relations, desired, first of all, that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the new Yugoslav state should be as strong as possible and in correct positions. Undoubtedly we thought and hoped that we had something to learn from them, especially on the problems of the organization of the new state of people's democracy, in which we lacked experience, on the reconstruction and construction of the country, on the recognition, strengthening and affirmation of our positions in the international arena, etc.

The fact is that the Yugoslav government was the first to recognize our government as a legal government, and it established diplomatic relations with us as early as spring 1945.¹ We thanked the Yugoslav comrades for this act and expressed our gratitude to them, although after all, this act was no more than a normal action which should be taken immediately by any government of whatever country which pursues a realistic policy in the international arena.

We had no reason to welcome or regard the recognition of our government by the others as any «favour», or «special kindness» done to us. Our government was more than lawful, it had emerged from the flames of the war. As a result of the heroic and uncompromising fight which we waged against the occupiers and their local collaborators, our government enjoyed the support and love of the whole people, it resolutely expressed and pursued a correct principled foreign and internal policy and knew and defended its rights and duties in the international arena.

Thus, looked at dispassionately or, as you might say, in

¹ The decision of the Yugoslav government on the recognition of the Albanian Democratic government was published on May 1, 1945.

principle, that act of recognition of our government by the Yugoslav government was something quite normal, an action which it or any other government ought to take.

In the conditions and circumstances of that time, however, when we were unjustly facing the open boycott and efforts of the Anglo-Americans, not merely to refuse us recognition, but also to overthrow us, when we were still not recognized by the others, etc., the act of the Yugoslav government warranted our respect and gratitude. Moreover, the troubled situation in Greece, as a result of the Anglo-American military intervention, presented a new danger on our southern borders. The Greek government, formed in exile and delivered by the allies directly into the soft seats, immediately proclaimed openly the old pretensions to grab the southern part of Albania. The ancient fable of the so-called Northern Epirus began to circulate through the chancelleries of the Great Powers again and the Greek monarcho-fascist representatives, openly supported by the Americans and the British, launched a furious campaign in international conferences and meetings for a new partitioning of Albania. We raised our voice strongly against this savage and unjust policy which was pursued towards our young state and we ourselves were the fundamental factor and the number-one guarantee that we would defend our lawful rights on the national and international arena, just as we did. The external factors which expressed themselves in our favour had the value of auxiliary, supporting factors.

In the first place, we saw and found one such factor in the just internationalist policy of the Soviet Union led by Stalin, in the Stalinist foreign policy, which, just as it came to the defence of the interests and rights of all other countries and peoples, great and small, also came to the defence of our just cause. Stalin's representatives supported the new Albania and the order of people's democracy which we were establishing, and at the same time, they exposed the efforts of international reaction, its threats and attempts to interfere in our internal affairs or to deny and trample upon our rights. The

fact is that at this period the Yugoslav government, too, through declarations or through its representatives, took a stand in defence of our rights and, indeed, it must be said that it proved especially zealous in connection with the recognition and defence of our state borders from the ambitions of others. Later I shall explain what was the meaning of this «defence» and why the Titoites displayed such surprising zeal in connection with our cause. Here I want only to point out what was obvious and loudly proclaimed by them in 1945 and 1946, just as it was proclaimed in 1970 and 1980. As far as we knew and could see at those moments, we undoubtedly had every reason to express our gratitude for this aid they gave us and they accepted our gratitude with pleasure and even became annoyed when we did not lay it on thickly, and especially when we did not publish it in the press and mention it in speeches or did not send it to them in writing. I shall explain what was the meaning of this «habit» of theirs to demand everything, especially good declarations, in writing and especially published in the newspapers.

Here I could present a number of other facts and aspects which have to do with our «warm» relations with the Yugoslavs in the first and second year after Liberation (in this period there was no economic aid to mention), but I think that I have said enough to prove an authentic truth about the so-called «period of warm friendly relations» with the Yugoslavs. I want to say that for their part, all this «kindness», «aid» and «support» in essence was only a bluff, a great trick, a trap camouflaged with laurel leaves and olive branches, but which concealed under the leaves the iron teeth of sworn enemies of the Party and of the freedom of our Homeland. In saying this, I have no desire to deny either the «good» or the truth, or to misinterpret or to avoid the facts, as the Titoites have claimed and still claim. Our Party has never had this habit and it has never allowed anyone in its ranks to distort even one word from history, let alone the whole of history.

The facts are stubborn. Let them speak for themselves.

As the greatest and most «indisputable» aid and support which they gave us at the start the Yugoslavs mention the recognition of our government by them in May 1945 and their efforts in international conferences, etc., to persuade others to recognize our lawful government and the inviolability of our borders.

To this end, they present «facts», re-publish statements, reminiscences, etc., etc. Yes, those facts, those statements exist, and we have never denied them. However, the Titoites have always tried to conceal, «to forget», to wipe out any trace of a series of other facts and arguments, which relate to the same question and occurred at the same period. Concretely: precisely at the time when they were loudly publicizing their recognition of our government, of the independence of Albania, and its inviolable territorial unity, in secrecy, in talks at the highest ranks of the state and party leadership they were hatching up plans for the annexation of Albania and turning it into the 7th Republic of Yugoslavia! As early as the beginning of 1945, one of Tito's closest collaborators, Moša Pijade, demanded that the new chancellery of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Belgrade should have, not 6, but 7 cabinets! According to the Titoites, the 7th cabinet was for the «Yugoslav Republic of Albania»!¹

Someone in present-day Yugoslavia may present this indisputable fact as the crazy whim of Pijade, or as an initial «desire» or «wavering» of others. This is not so. A little later, in 1946 and, especially in 1947 and 1948, these plans for the annexation of Albania were to be put before us officially, with savage pressure by Tito himself and the people around him. I shall speak about this later. Here my purpose is

¹ Besides other things, the book by Vladimir Dedijer, «Novi Prilozi za Biografiju J. B. Tita» (2) Rijeka, 1981 (New Additions to the Biography of J. B. Tito), p. 902, says, «Moša Pijade, the great supporter of the Federation of Yugoslavia and Albania, proposed... that the plans for the new building of the Federation in new Belgrade should include the immediate building of 7 cabinets: for the 6 Yugoslav republics and for Albania.»

simply to show the falsity and cunning villainy of Tito and company in connection with their public action of 1945 over the «recognition» of Albania.

However, the question arises: why did they decide on and proclaim the recognition of Albania, of our government, etc., at a time when they were secretly working out their annexationist plans? Were they hasty?! Did they make a mistake?! Not at all! They were not fools. And to give the devil his due, they have completely proved their ability and cunning, especially in concocting plots and underhand actions.

In the concrete instance, their tactics was refined and covered many fields.

Tito and company thought (and here they were gravely mistaken) that in one way or the other, Albania was going to belong to them. After Berat they secured the key positions in our leadership, they were aware of and felt our euphoric friendship towards them and thought that they would easily eliminate any remaining obstacle. Hence, they considered that in general the «internal factor» was settled. Now the problem was that the annexation of Albania should not arouse debates and problems in the international arena, should never be considered by others as an annexation *manu militari**, as a result of war, etc. This annexation, according to them, should be carried out in conditions of peace and bear the brand of the «lawful will» of the Albanian state and its legal government. Then they would have no problems. Precisely to this end, as the first step, Albania had to be recognized as an independent state, the new Albanian government had to be recognized as the legal government which expressed the aspirations and desires of the people. When all, and especially the Great Powers, had completed this recognition, then obviously there was no reason why the «desire» of a lawful government, recognized world-wide, to unite with whoever it pleased, hence, in the concrete instance with

* through military force (Lat. in the original).

Yugoslavia, should arouse concern and problems. In this way, the problem of Kosova would be solved, too; the question of attaching it to Albania was not raised, but Albania was to be «united» with Kosova within the framework of Tito's Yugoslavia!

This was the overriding aim of the Yugoslav government with its act of May 1, 1945. With this it set the «example» for the others who should hasten to recognize a legal government in a sovereign country. All the «aid» of the Yugoslav government and its «efforts» to influence Britain, the USA, France, etc., to recognize the independence of Albania and its democratic government were for this purpose. Hence, Tito and Co. recognized Albania *de jure* in order to gobble it up *de facto*.

All their efforts «to attack» the ambitions and pretensions of others, especially of the Greek monarcho-fascists in connection with the partitioning of Albania, are part of this plan. Even to this day, this «aid» of those years is boasted about in Belgrade and, indeed, is used to «prove» that the Yugoslav leadership allegedly not only never wanted the annexation of Albania, but helped to ensure that no part of the territory of Albania would be affected by the pretensions of the monarcho-fascists of that time!

In the middle of August 1946, when the proceedings of the Peace Conference had opened in Paris, we and the whole international public heard about the forceful denunciations which Moša Pijade made in one of the sessions of the Conference of the proposal of Tsaldaris¹ for a secret Greek-Yugoslav agreement on the partitioning of Albania.

A few days after Pijade had spoken I went² to Paris myself to lead our delegation at this Conference and at our first meeting I thanked Pijade for the stand which he and the Yugoslav government had taken towards the filthy pro-

1 At that time prime minister of Greece and its representative at the Peace Conference in Paris.

2 Comrade Enver Hoxha left for Paris on August 18, 1946.

posal of Tsaldaris. I was together with Molotov at the moment I met Pijade, and he was very pleased with my words, the more so because I was speaking in front of Molotov.

«With their frenzied greed the monarcho-fascist wolves put a major fact in my hands,» Pijade began to declaim in a boastful tone. «But I used it and dropped it like a bomb in the Conference!»

When Pijade ended his boastful proclamation Molotov said with quiet good humour:

«You gave them just what they deserved! But Comrade Enver was not here those days and does not know the details of how the Greeks came to give you that 'bomb'.»

«Tsaldaris summoned me to a secret talk,» Moša Pijade set out to tell me with great relish. «He said to me: 'We have long standing claims towards southern Albania, but you Serbs, too, have claims towards northern Albania. Let us get together and reach agreement on what belongs to you and what belongs to us and finish the business with Albania. It should not exist as an apple of discord between us. Let it be a sweet apple, divided in half by agreement!' They went as far as that!» said Pijade, fixing his eyes on us to see the effect of his words.

«Yes, yes!» said Molotov looking serious, and asked him: «Then, what happened about the bargain?!»

«We could not and never will allow them to lay a finger on sister Albania,» declared Pijade. «That is why I did what they had never dreamed I would do in the Conference.»

I thanked him once again for this statement, describing it as internationalist aid and defence from a representative of a fraternal country. At that time, however, I did not know that precisely this «defender» of the southern part of Albania dreamed of gobbling up the whole of Albania, did not know that it was precisely this Pijade who as early as 1945 wanted to «reserve» the 7th cabinet in the Yugoslav general chancellery for us!

Hence, in conformity with the secret plans for the annexation of the whole of Albania, Tito's men had no reason not

to come out «in defence» of the southern part on which Tsaldaris had his eyes. They believed that things would proceed in their favour and, in this case, why should they allow Albania, the love of their dreams, to be partitioned by the Greeks when they could enjoy the whole of it themselves?!

In brief, the Yugoslav «defenders» did not defend Albania as a free and sovereign state, but defended those territories which, in their secret plans, comprised the southern domain of the «great» Yugoslav multi-national «state» of many peoples which they had dreamed of for centuries.

This, then, was the main basis which gave rise to all that zeal of the Yugoslavs for the «recognition of Albania» and the «inviolability» of its borders.

Naturally, in working for this main strategy at those moments Tito and company, at the same time, were also pursuing other aims, through this «internationalist» policy of «defence».

By emerging in the forefront of «defenders» of the cause of Albania they were investing capital in the progressive and democratic world to enable themselves to pose as «champions» of the rights of other countries, as «proven internationalists», as the representatives of a state and a party which nurtured no ambitions for annexation or hegemony. On the contrary, they made world opinion believe that even when others talked to them about agreements and secret treaties to the detriment of third parties (as in the case of Tsaldaris), they not only did not agree, but denounced the annexationists publicly! The purest of the pure! — that is how Tito's men could be described.

Thus, the game was played in a subtle and dangerous way. This appearance of «purity» in this initial phase was to serve them as a powerful argument later, at the second step, «to prove» that in the question of the union of Albania with Yugoslavia there was no sort of plot or secret moves on the part of the Yugoslavs. «No,» Tito and company would defend themselves, «we accepted the unification because this was the desire of the Albanians themselves and we had no

pretensions at all in this direction. On the contrary, as you know, gentlemen, it was we who came out in defence of the independence of Albania and the recognition of its independence even when others were silent about this or had pretensions to partition it.»

Many years later, when it had become clear, not only to the Yugoslav chauvinists, but also to everybody else, that in connection with Albania Tito had made his reckoning without the owner, a Greek monarcho-fascist was to emerge again and repeat to the Yugoslavs the act of Tsaldaris in 1946, this time «from positions of equality». However, this new attempt at negotiations differed somewhat from the former one. This time the participants were of higher rank: the monarch of Greece Paul in person was to make the proposal for the dividing up of Albania to the president of Yugoslavia Tito. Another difference is the fact that this time Tito did not see it appropriate to denounce the proposal even there, tête-à-tête with the King, let alone in public.

Naturally, time has shown and will show what was behind this «royal joke», which was made in Corfu looking across the straits of Albania. But one thing is indisputable: Aesop's famous fox called the grapes which she desired so much «unripe» only when she saw she could not reach them!

As I said, however, this belongs to a later period, the period when we had long been at daggers drawn with Yugoslav modern revisionism. So let us return to the period of «friendship», the period when Tito and company «defended» us and supported us *de jure* in order to gobble us up *de facto*.

This was true of the Yugoslav policy towards us at that time in all other aspects. This was also the aim of the «backing» and «support» which Velimir Stojnić suddenly began to express to me after the plot at Berat, of the «greetings» which Tito and company sent me through various people, and of the high Yugoslav decoration which they awarded me in 1946. All these things were done to make us slacken our vigilance, to cover up any doubt about the plot with a curtain

of rose-tinted smoke, and to strike the blow at us precisely when we did not expect it.

As we were to learn later, while they were issuing me «certificates» of trust and gratitude, at the same time the flattering and further incitement of the ambitions of Koçi Xoxe, Nako Spiru and Sejfulla Malëshova continued, with the aim that they should now carry out what they were unable to accomplish at Berat — my removal from the leadership of the Party. In this first period Nako Spiru was displaying all his pro-Yugoslav inclinations, but it was to be proved later that the mutual links between Nako and the Yugoslav leadership had no correct Marxist basis. They were links of an agent with his employers. Nako dreamed of becoming general secretary of the Party, and he thought he could use the Yugoslavs in order to replace me, but it was the Yugoslavs who used Nako for their purposes. That vile and perfidious document of Nako Spiru's written secretly to the Yugoslav leadership, in which he used the worst words about me and demanded that my work should be examined, in other words, that they should use their influence to remove me from the post to which the Party had elected me, belongs precisely to this phase.

However, the Yugoslavs passed over the request which Nako made to them in silence, apparently because they saw in Nako an element who might cause them problems or upset their plans. They preferred Koçi Xoxe. Nako was very hurt but, driven by his ambition, he established new links with others. The Yugoslavs were to see Nako's new links, but they continued to maintain complete silence about his compromising document. However, in the grave circumstances of November 1947 (I shall speak about them below), Tito's men were to bring this compromising document out of the drawer and to confront Nako with it, as a means of pressure, as a «weapon» which, in the grave circumstances created, made Nako kill himself. But this time, too, we were to be told nothing, because at those moments it was in the interest of the Yugoslavs that the circumstances of Nako Spiru's suicide

should remain the greatest possible mystery for us. Even later, the Yugoslavs were to produce this document again and to publish only some parts of it with the aim of creating the worst possible opinion about us amongst the public.

Such, then, were the «Yugoslav comrades» who posed as «pure Marxists» and whom we, unfortunately, lacking facts and lacking unity in our ranks, continued to consider comrades and friends both in 1945 and in 1946.

Of course, even at this period there were some signs, some indications, minor or major, which could not be concealed and could not make a good impression on us.

Groups of comrades, a youth delegation or a delegation of the Women's Organization went to Belgrade on visits or on business, and to our astonishment the Yugoslav comrades mentioned the name and praised the «merits» of Liri Gega! On one occasion, Liri who had been condemned at Berat had to go to Yugoslavia (I don't remember why or in what circumstances, but no doubt through the intervention and mediation of the Yugoslavs themselves), and the number-two member of the Yugoslav leadership Milovan Djilas accorded a warm, cordial welcome to this person expelled from our Political Bureau and from the Central Committee of the Party on account of her grave sectarian mistakes! They began to put pressure on us to rehabilitate her and Ymer Dishnica, whom we had condemned for opportunism.

What could we call these actions of the Yugoslav comrades?! They made all those accusations against us and built a whole platform, that of Berat, basing themselves on the mistakes and grave faults of these two elements. How, then, did it come about that now they were supporting them and putting pressure on us to re-admit them to the leadership of the Party?! Astonishing!

As I said above, Liri Gega was one of their pledged agents and at Berat the Yugoslavs were obliged to sacrifice her, «to condemn her», not because of the damage which she had caused the CPA, but simply because they treated her mistakes as the mistakes of the leadership of the Party, mainly mine

and Miladin's. After this, it was natural that they should ask us to rehabilitate Liri Gega. As for Ymer Dishnica, the Yugoslavs wanted to rehabilitate him, because they had long been aware of his opportunist and conciliatory tendencies. Such an opportunist in our leadership would be one vote more in favour of the Yugoslavs' secret plans.

Naturally, even though we did not know the meaning of the countless «surprises» of the Yugoslavs at that time, we did not agree to their proposals. It seemed that they were not «annoyed» about this and we continued our work, always retaining our respect and friendship for them, but also proceeding cautiously on this course. A series of their stands and views which either increased our doubts, or gave rise to serious suspicions and concern, made this prudence even more necessary.

In April 1945 a group of militarymen went to Yugoslavia to gain experience in a course or seminar organized with the Yugoslav military cadres. As soon as they returned Mehmet Shehu, Kristo Themelko, Tahir Kadare and, I think, two or three others came to my office and began to describe to me what they heard and learned:

«An analysis of major themes about the experience of the October Revolution and the revolution in Yugoslavia was made,» Mehmet Shehu began to report. «Comrades Tito and Kardelj personally explained the tactics and the strategy of the Yugoslav party on this cardinal question. In an extremely interesting way and with creative originality the comrades...»

«Yes, yes,» I interrupted to imply to Mehmet Shehu to get on to the content of the matter, «what was said concretely?!»

«This conclusion constituted the essence: The Yugoslav revolution did not follow the course of the Russian revolution, each had its own peculiarities. The Russian revolution could not be applied in the conditions of Yugoslavia, therefore the Yugoslav revolution is peculiar and herein lies the merit of Comrade Tito, and our armies should be organized on this basis.»

«Is this the conclusion which you drew from what you

heard or the conclusion at which the Yugoslav comrades have arrived?» I asked very worried.

«It is the conclusion that Comrades Tito and Kardelj have now arrived at,» replied Mehmet Shehu.

At that moment I remembered the debate with Tempo in the spring of 1943 about the same problem. Tempo had served up to us precisely this «conclusion», this view at that time and I had strongly opposed him, describing it as not right and disparagement of the international value and importance of the Great October Socialist Revolution. At that time I laid the blame on Tempo, while now it turned out that Tito and Kardelj were in the same position.

Mehmet Shehu sensed my disapproval and immediately changed his tactics. He backed away from any further presentation of the new Yugoslav «strategies and tactics» and left Themelko to jump into the murky waters.

Themelko presented all the views expressed by Tito, Kardelj and other Yugoslav leaders. Apart from what I mentioned above, the other views were about «the stages of the revolution», on which the Yugoslavs thought that «since the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution has still not been completed, we shall delay the transition to the second stage, the stage of the proletarian revolution»; that «the road of transition from the former to the latter stage is the road of reforms»; that the «national liberation councils are organs of the bourgeois democratic revolution»; that «one of the distinctions between the October Revolution and the Yugoslav revolution is that in the Yugoslav revolution the bourgeoisie is a member, a participant in the front»; that «Tito has enriched Marxism with the tactic of the national liberation war» (!), etc., etc.

I cannot claim that I had everything clear at those moments, but many of these views seemed to me dubious, even unacceptable, some had a smell of inordinate boasting and megalomania, while others were full of equivocation and fraught with great dangers.

Very cautiously I told the comrades that such problems

are important but extremely difficult, that the Yugoslav comrades themselves are undoubtedly still studying these problems, that the experience of the war and the revolution cannot be generalized immediately and easily, etc.

«I say these things to you,» I told the comrades, «so that you will be prudent and cautious, both in the talks and lectures which you will give and in our daily work. Then, since the Yugoslav comrades have not made public the things that they told you there, you yourselves should not implicate yourselves in the propagation of the views which you heard. We must consider everything well, must weigh it up and compare it with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism,» I instructed them finally. «In this way we shall learn and shall not permit mistakes.»

The generals got up and left, but the things which they told me I was to mull over in my head for a long time. On the one hand, I was worried about the essence of the views expressed by the Yugoslav comrades, about their mania to come out so quickly with major «generalizations» and great pretensions to the point of describing themselves as «enrichers» of Marxism-Leninism! But, I thought, perhaps the initial euphoria after the victory leads them to such hasty conclusions. In time everything would be put in order, the aid of comrades, especially the Soviet comrades, would not be withheld, either from the Yugoslavs or from us, to make matters clear to us and help us adopt correct stands.

My main worry was about our comrades. They were too ready to exalt everything the Yugoslavs said. Of course, we considered Tito and company as comrades and friends, but the tendencies to «absorb» without any reason everything they said did not seem to me correct or communist. This was not the first occasion that I had noticed this kind of euphoric exaltation and subjugation to the «great» and «powerful».

At that period Koçi Xoxe had gone to Belgrade on a «special» mission and as soon as he returned he came to my office. Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo were there, too.

«What honours, what a reception they accorded us!» he

told me. «I can't describe them. Apart from General Marko (Ranković), Comrades Djilas and Kardelj received me!»

He mentioned the names of the latter two in such a tone of veneration that you would think «God» himself had met Koçi.

«Who are they?» I asked him casually there and then, as though I had not heard their names before. Naturally, I knew very well who Djilas and Kardelj were, had no bad impression about them and did not want to infringe their authority, but Xoxe's veneration did not seem to be correct.

Koçi was shocked at my «tactless» question.

«Comrades Djilas and Kardelj?!» he said opening his eyes wide to display his astonishment. «They are Tito's greatest brains. They are big chiefs. You might say they are the ideologists of the Party.»

«Oh!» I said «in surprise», «Then, they really are big shots. What did they talk about?»

«We talked about everything. A little about everything. About the war, the government, security, defence. They spoke well of us. They are going to help us. 'Don't be too hasty in this period,' they told me, 'so that you don't muddle up... the advance of the revolution!'"

«What do you mean with 'advance'?» I asked him.

«Well, as they told me, that is, the stairs, the steps...» mumbled Koçi.

«The stages of the revolution, that's what they told you!» Sejfulla corrected him disdainfully.

«That's right, that's what they told me, we must not muddle up. It was a terribly complicated business, but as far as I understood, we shouldn't be too hasty, because for the time being we'll be a democracy for the people, but the bourgeoisie shouldn't be greatly disturbed, because you mix up those, what do you call them, stages.»

«Never mind, never mind,» interrupted his colleague Sejfulla with open scorn. «This is a whole theory, I shall explain it to you some day. But in essence they are right, all my efforts in the Bureau and in the government are in that direction.»

We shall see what Sejfulla was driving at with his «in-

terjections». I was speaking about that kind of unquestioning, blind veneration which a number of our comrades were creating towards the leadership of the CPY, I don't mean that its authority and prestige, or the warm mutual relations of our comrades with the Yugoslav comrades should have been infringed, but when I found the occasion, I stressed that trust and respect should be mutual, and in our relations there should be no creation of the positions of «big shots», «masters», who know and decide everything, as against the «little fellows», the «apprentices», who ought to sit in silence, listening humbly, and carry out what the «master» says. An end had to be put to this evil. The comrades had to be trained and tempered so that they did not judge things through the head of this or that individual, but according to the line of the Party, taking the reality as the basis, and being guided only by the Marxist-Leninist theory.

However, at that period this essential thing could not be achieved. Some of the comrades of the Bureau of our Central Committee had been «indoctrinated» in such a way that they kept in step with the Yugoslav «friends» in everything and made every stand dependent on the Yugoslav stands.

In this way, although apparently standing «on the sidelines» and without «direct» interference, the Yugoslavs were ensuring that their plans for the subjugation of our Party and the usurpation of Albania proceeded normally. The Yugoslavs were doing their work with «our» hands, through the people whom they had carefully prepared during the war and at Berat and had now thrown into the offensive.

The secret agents of Belgrade in our ranks

After the attack which they made on us at Berat, Tito and company also needed the smokescreen of «affection» and «friendship» to cover up any evidence about the true author of the plot at Berat, and to carry their work through to the

end. At Berat they planted the seeds of the destruction of our future, planted them, sad to say, amongst us, in the ranks of the leadership of our Party, and immediately after this, «withdrew» to leave the evil which they had planted to develop of itself within our leadership.

It was not long before their plans began to yield the first results. The fact is that a line, which was not a correct Marxist-Leninist line, was imposed on the leadership of our Party in a hostile way. After the Berat Plenum it could readily be noticed that in our speeches and documents little was said about the Party and a great deal was said about the Front. This was a consequence of «my sectarian mistakes» since I spoke a great deal about the Party and allegedly little about the Front. At the same time, they imposed on us the view that we should keep the Party in a semi-illegal situation and maintain secrecy about its existence and its being in the leadership of the whole life of the country.

«The existence of the Party should be hidden» — this was a consequence of the liquidationist line of the Yugoslavs which had two aims:

First, to lower the prestige and authority of the Party in the ranks of the communists and the people, and consequently to open the way to the liberal, opportunist spirit in ideology, in the political line, in the economy, in the state power, and in every other sector. All this was done under cover of the anti-Marxist «theorizations» and distortions in connection with the two stages of the revolution, the period and the roads of transition from one stage to the other, etc. These were also the tendencies of Sejfulla Malëshova and the ideas he had brought with him and which now he was to develop rapidly, supported by the Yugoslav mission.

Second, with the hiding of the existence of our Party, the Yugoslavs were striving to prepare the terrain better for acceptance of the «leadership» of the CPY and Tito in our life, as the sole and main leadership, both of Albania and of that «CPA which had given bad leadership and made so many political and organizational mistakes».

At Berat they were unable to achieve their aim of my total liquidation as an important condition for the unrestrained application of their plan and, apparently, they had postponed it for later. Automatically the hopes of the competitors for the same post: Sejfulla, Nako and Koçi, were postponed for later, too. After Liberation they were to do everything in their power to take over the work of leadership completely and to isolate me utterly until they could remove me as unnecessary.

However, they did not achieve this aim either, because I did not sit idle in the work with which the Party and the state had charged me. The unjust criticisms and attacks did not discourage me or drive me to despair. I had lost neither my courage nor my confidence. I still stuck to my conviction that the Party had had a correct political and organizational line, without mistakes, generally speaking, regardless of some subjective errors. Otherwise, we would not have achieved these victories of such great importance, first of all, the liberation of the Homeland and the establishment of the people's state power. At the same time I fought with the complete conviction that matters had to be put right and suitable situations created to present the issues correctly once again.

As soon as any mention was made of «the re-examination of the past», however, the «comrades» of Berat displayed an astonishing displeasure and anger which, later, was to turn into obvious fear.

Quarrels and rows broke out in the Political Bureau. Obviously, these quarrels did not break out over minor things but, on the contrary, over the major problems which the country, the Party and the state were facing in all fields.

Thus, we entered the new historical stage without a clearly and accurately defined line. This would have been a minor evil and could have been overcome easily if our leadership had been in harmony and predisposed to exert all its united strength to cope with the problems. Precisely this

essential condition, however, did not exist. After the victory which they scored at Berat, now Sejfulla, Nako and Koçi were not seeking the ways to solve the major problems of the country, but the ways to achieve their own ambitions towards the «throne». On the quiet, each of them aimed to occupy first place. Sejfulla Malëshova, in particular, began to display greater impatience. His great thirst for power, to become «chief of the Party and the state», impelled him to throw off his past laziness and display great zeal. The peculiar, extremely complicated problems which the new situation presented apparently led him to think that the time had come for him to seize the banner. The fact that he had lived in a socialist country, in the Soviet Union, favoured him in this and he posed as if he alone were capable of manoeuvring cautiously in the complicated situation of the new stage we had entered.

In each meeting of the Political Bureau, as soon as the agenda was presented, he would say quite brazenly:

«Listen comrades, the problems of the construction and organization of the state, the economy, culture, etc., are very complicated and require a dialectical treatment, without falling either to one side or to the other of the opposites. The Soviet experience of the years after the revolution, which I had the good fortune to live through, convinces us that we must be very manoeuvrable; for example: what about nationalizations, the private sector, the state sector, industry, or agriculture?! Are we going to nationalize everything?! Agreed,» said the «professor», «this is the aim, this is the future of socialism! But how are we going to do this? Immediately? Through orders? It could be done in this way, because now we have all the means in our hands. But if we were to act in this way we would not be communists, but sectarians, adventurers! Because not only would neither the big owner nor the small owner understand us, but even if we took the enterprises, the banks and the mines over by force, we would not be capable of making them function efficiently.»

«Very well,» interjected Koçi, «but what are you getting at? Tell us in plain language.»

«I'm speaking in plain language, Comrade Xoxe, indeed, I'm explaining Marxism in quite a vulgar way so that you will understand me properly,» retorted Sejfulla.

On almost all the issues I saw that we were having a great deal of discussion, making a lot of noise and the idea was forming in my mind that this noise was not being made so much on account of the «nature of the problems», but rather that one and the other was grasping at the «nature of problems» in order to realize special personal aims.

When we defeated Sejfulla with sound arguments against his «theories» about the defence of the private sector, etc., he immediately clutched at Lenin's «NEP» and, when here, too, we proved that he was distorting Lenin, he immediately grasped at Tito.

«Please! Please!» he protested. «Comrades Tito, Kardelj and Djilas don't talk for nothing. They themselves are not being hasty and how many times they have advised us not to be hasty. We are in the stage when the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, private property and socialist property will proceed parallel. We must not skip the stages.»

We had very long debates during 1945, especially over the major problems of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, how we were to proceed in these elections, what they would represent, what the role of the Party should be in this great political campaign, who the candidates to be proposed to the people would be, etc.

«Let us not forget,» said Sejfulla Malëshova raising his voice, «that these elections will put the seal on how much the people want us, or more precisely, whom the people are with.»

«What are you saying?» I asked him. «In the year 1945 you still want proofs of whom the people are with? The people are with the Party, with the Front, with the Democratic Government which we have formed and which is running the country!»

«You are right, indeed, we are in agreement in principle,»

put in Sejfulla. «But we must convince everybody, and especially the world, that the people are with us. The votes will demonstrate this conclusively. We must not underestimate what the Anglo-American allies say. Nor must we underestimate the voices of that trend which is crystallizing as an opposition within the Front and which is demanding to take part in the elections independently!

«We say that the people are with us. The Anglo-Americans say that this is not so. They say that the people don't want us! We shall defend our viewpoint, but without underestimating or ignoring the voice of the opposition. What I mean is that we must not act as sectarians in the election campaign, but as the vanguard of democracy. And democracy means that we must allow people — electors and candidates for election, freedom, so they can act freely. We should present our list of candidates, but should allow the opponents, that is to say, those who are not with us, freedom to run their own candidates. In this way we will shut the mouth of reaction which says we have restricted freedoms and have eliminated democracy.»

«Such a course,» I objected immediately, «will lead us, not just to an impasse, but to destruction. To allow reaction to come out independently in the election campaign means to accept sharing power with them, that power which we created through bloodshed and sacrifice.»

«No, don't judge the matter so narrowly,» said Sejfulla. «This would be only a tactic. The people will see that we are for complete freedom and will link themselves with us even more.»

«The opposite will occur,» I said. «In this way we will disappoint and confuse the people, the workers and peasants, the masses of the poor of town and countryside. When they see in the lists of candidates elements who have sucked their blood in the past, elements who have been alien to the war or have stood aside from the war, they will have the right to think: What did we fight for? To elect such people to the leadership?!»

«One moment! One moment!» shouted Sejfulla as if he had found the famous point of Archimedes. «Logic is leading you to the point. When the people see elements they do not like in the lists, then they will cast the ballot balls not for them, but for our lists. In this way the differentiation will be made and these elements will be isolated! Then we will be able to say to the American and British allies unreservedly: You see, Gentlemen, whom the people are with?! Our victory will be sanctioned.»

«I am opposed to such a policy, however 'broad' and democratic' you call it, Sejfulla,» I said bluntly.

«This is falling into sectarianism!» shouted Sejfulla. «It is a return to that line which we attacked at Berat. And I'm sorry to say, Comrade Enver, that I observe with regret that you have still not understood Berat.»

«I have not understood and never will understand the Plenum of Berat in the way you say,» I told him. «If sectarian stands and mistakes were attacked at Berat, this by no means implies that now we should go over to the opposite — opportunism.»

«Only a sectarian assessment could call this platform, which I present and defend and will defend to the end, an opportunist policy,» screamed Sejfulla. «Let the other comrades speak!»

«These matters are not simple, not simple at all,» put in Koçi Xoxe. «However, listening to what Sejfulla says and what Enver says, I think that we should be somewhat more balanced. I am not with one or the other, but I put it like this: we have an experience from the time of the 'Puna' Organization of Korça. When the Comintern sent us the new line in 1937, we took part in the elections as the opposition, presented our lists and the people in Korça gave us most of their votes. We won at that time irrespective that afterwards the regime threw me and a series of comrades out of office. Here I lean towards Sejfulla. He is right. I hope that the reactionaries won't win anything. If they win, we'll see what we shall do... We won't allow them to take power from us...

Then, we have the experience of the Yugoslav comrades. They are not afraid to reach agreement even with the bourgeois, with Subašić. They have him in the government. Of course, that's their affair, we don't interfere, but we should not forget that they have always been patient and generous towards reaction. At the Congress of the Party in Serbia the Yugoslav comrades declared that all the political parties should act freely, that they should have their own newspapers and pamphlets opposed to those of the party, that a struggle should be fought between the two sides through the papers, through speeches and, in this way, the people will be convinced about the freedom which they have won. They do this because otherwise reaction would cause trouble for them. We should learn from them because they are our friends. It is not a matter of a few well-known reactionaries, because I know where to put them, but I am concerned about the allies. We are waiting for them to recognize us and they are not recognizing us before the elections. So I say we should take a broader approach. Let them take part in the elections, but they will lose, because their cause has been lost for a long time. However, I think we should consider what Enver said. I say that we should attack some outright reactionary elements and not allow them to present themselves in the lists, but to allow the others.»

«I am for a cautious and intelligent policy,» Nako Spiru added fuel to the fire. «Comrade Koçi mentioned something from the experience of the recent Congress of the Communist Party of Serbia. I've read those materials, too, and there is something to learn from them, especially from the courage of the Yugoslav comrades and their ability to manoeuvre. They are not afraid of the participation of reactionaries in the elections or even of their getting into the councils. 'Even if the elements of reaction triumph in a council,' said the Yugoslav comrades about their own experience, 'we should not throw them out because their election shows that we do not have all the masses with us. We should allow them to run things and, since they are reactionaries, they will not fulfil

the demands of the masses. In this way they will expose themselves and will be abandoned by the people.' That is what the Yugoslav comrades said,» repeated Nako, «and I think that this is a bold and clever tactic. We have no reason to fear, either, now that we are in power.»

«I insist on what I said before,» I said speaking again. «Comrades, you know that after the blow it received, reaction pulled in its horns, but it has by no means given up its aims and never will. It has begun to move, to rally its forces, to create its links and to organize the attack. External reaction, especially Anglo-American reaction, is in support of it.»

This is not the occasion to dwell longer on the endless debates we held over those cardinal problems at that period, but I only want to point out that from what was occurring amongst us I was becoming ever more worried about a series of things.

First, I saw that a dangerous spirit and trend of opportunism was making itself felt and Sejfulla Malëshova was the banner-bearer of this tendency.

Second, the lack of unity of thought and action between us was very obvious. Almost all of us (with the exception of Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova) were involved in arguments and disputes, but I saw that the contradictions of Koçi and Pandi and, up to a point, of Nako Spiru, too, with Sejfulla, were not contradictions of views, but had to do more with side-issues, with «individual retorts», etc. It seemed to me that the comrades were not so much concerned about Sejfulla's opportunism as about Sejfulla himself, his strutting and posing, as the «incontestable» authority, «know-all» and a leader «of the first order».

This situation had to be grappled with and changed. I was even more convinced of this after the conclusion with complete success of the general elections which were organized throughout the country in December 1945. Through their votes the people proved that they were linked with the Party and our Democratic Front like flesh to bone. How-

ever, in the positive general picture there were also some saddening instances. Through the pressure of Sejfulla and the others, in some cases elements that the people detested were allowed to present themselves in the lists of candidates. Reports reached us immediately:

«We prefer not to vote at all rather than vote for Riza Dani,» a group of residents of the electoral zone at which the candidature of this anti-popular element had been proclaimed, said openly. Similar things occurred with others. There were cases when the electors voted for elements they did not like, solely because the Party had told them to do so, but not from their own conviction. I'm referring to elements such as Suat Asllani, Selaudin Toto, Shefqet Beja, Gjergj Kokoshi and others, who were to come out openly later as a dangerous group of enemies in the ranks of our Constituent Assembly.

At the same time Sejfulla Malëshova urgently pressed on with his efforts for the greatest possible opening up and orientation towards the West, for economic links with it, because, according to him, «in this way we will advance more rapidly and dispel from the minds of our allies the idea that we violate democracy», because «we can do nothing on our own», because «our friends (the Yugoslavs) have their own problems», etc. Therefore, according to Malëshova, our eyes should be directed towards the West. So that they would «recognize» us, in one meeting Sejfulla said:

«We should re-examine the question of the treaties of the time of Zog with the Americans and the British!»

«In what direction?» I asked in surprise.

«In the direction of recognizing these treaties. It will do us no harm if we recognize them!» replied Sejfulla quite unabashed.

«That is to say we should reject the decisions of the Congress of Përmet. Is this what you want, Sejfulla?» I asked angrily.

«Don't forget, comrades,» said Sejfulla, addressing Koçi, Nako and the others, «that the Congress of Përmet was held

in the period of sectarianism, before Berat! The decision taken there 'to re-examine', that is, to reject Zog's treaties with the allies seems to me to be a sectarian decision!»

I opposed him strongly and indignantly and, to my surprise, Koçi Xoxe sided with me, a thing which he had rarely done since Berat.

«Sejfulla Malëshova, you are going too far,» he said. «How can we reject the Congress which gave us the government? If we do as you say, it turns out that we should link up with America and Britain, but that time is over. As for contacts and friends, now we have others. Are we to recognize the oil concessions to the British and Americans?! This is serious. We need the oil ourselves and our Yugoslav friends are short of it, too!» concluded Koçi Xoxe and angrily slapped the envelope, on which he had jotted down two or three lines, on the table.

«Don't try to put me in a difficult position with the Yugoslav comrades!» Sejfulla turned to Koçi Xoxe. «We were together when we talked with them and they suggested that we should recognize Zog's treaties with the allies, because it would do us no harm.»

«What's this, what's this?» I asked immediately. «When did this occur?!»

«Koçi and I were together with Kardelj and Djilas,» Sejfulla began to explain, «and we outlined to them the conditions the Western allies laid down for us. They told us that we could recognize the treaties. Let Koçi tell you himself.»

«Don't mix up things or involve Comrades Kardelj and Djilas in them,» retorted Koçi Xoxe with a frown, but with a trembling voice. «We were not talking about Zog's concessions but about the recognition of our government by the allies.»

«That's what I said,» Sejfulla snapped back.

«Yes, but in the first place, you had more to say than they did. You presented matters in such detail you made a mess of it. You confused me, let alone them. That's how the matter stands. Don't confuse the comrades.»

«When you had discussed this with the Yugoslav comrades, why did you not inform us after you returned?» I asked Koçi and Sejfulla. «This is an extremely serious problem.»

«How do you mean, we have not informed you!» Sejfulla defended himself. «All my efforts in the Bureau for an intelligent tactic with the allies have been in that spirit. I considered that Koçi had told you the details.»

«You confuse matters and now you are confusing all of us!» retorted Koçi Xoxe. «With all your great theory you are only making a mess.»

This, then, was the advice which the Yugoslav «comrades» and «friends» gave us! We should reject what we had decided at the Congress of Përmet, accept everything that the Americans and the British suggested to us and retain the enslaving treaties which Zog had signed with them. Koçi Xoxe tried to soften and deny this truth, but 4-5 months later open pressure to recognize Zog's enslaving treaties was to be exerted on us again by the Yugoslav leadership.¹ Of course, we did not submit to these pressures and continued our former stand.

The quarrels broke out again, only this time extremely bitter quarrels and with mutual recriminations between Koçi and Sejfulla. Bedri and Tuk, vacillating as usual, mostly posed as neutral, while Nako Spiru listened, all eyes and ears, and tried to find the most favourable position for him to adopt. The balance leaned in favour of Koçi Xoxe. Sejfulla Malëshova was suddenly placed in the centre of the attack. To my surprise, in a number of meetings and discussions that we held at that period, Koçi, Nako and Pandi Kristo

1 A radiogram which Nako Spiru sent from Belgrade on April 25, 1946 to Comrade Enver Hoxha includes the following: «They think that we should recognize the treaties with the Americans under the formula that Albania accepts all the pre-war commitments with other states with the exception of aggressors. In regard to the treaties with America, Kardelj sees nothing of importance, says they can easily be accepted.» CAP.

turned on Sejfulla Malëshova with all their might. They presented a series of new facts and arguments which proved the treachery of Sejfulla Malëshova, but also proved something else: these facts, which they knew and had discussed with one another, they had kept completely hidden from me.

All these things threw light not only on the grave mistakes of Sejfulla Malëshova, which I knew in general outline and had long opposed. The main thing was that new light was being thrown on an «old» mistake, on the Berat Plenum. The time had come to analyse and judge calmly and with maturity and responsibility the things that had occurred.

The end of Sejfulla Malëshova brings the plot hatched up by the Yugoslavs more to light

The dialectic of things was having its way. The plot hatched up behind the scenes at Berat bore within itself, besides the dangers and all the other perils for the Party and the country, the seeds of disaster for the plotters themselves.

At Berat Koçi Xoxe, Nako Spiru and Sejfulla Malëshova comprised a «unity» and had been egged on by the Yugoslavs in a joint attack against our Party. The Yugoslavs had done this by nurturing in each of them ambitions to occupy the main post. However, there were three of them and only one post. Hence, the time would come when the «unity» of the main anti-party trio at Berat would fall apart. The personal ambitions of each of them would be directed towards getting rid of the other two partners.

The development of events and the interests of the plotters were to bring about that the first pawn to be eliminated from the game would be Sejfulla Malëshova. In fact, he had deserved punishment, not only now but much earlier, and it could even be said that his entire promotion to the leadership was a mistake. In that short period of the war that he

spent in Albania, he showed himself to be an unrivalled coward, and had no idea where and how the fighting and actions were carried out. He was for a struggle of cafés and drawing-rooms, a battle of smart phrases spoken, of course, because it was a great effort and sacrifice for him to write. After Liberation he proved to be a liberal parliamentary democrat, who did everything in his power to impose on the Party a «broad» opportunist line, a «front without restrictions» in which even the war criminals could take part.

Both during and after the war, Sejfulla Malëshova demonstrated that he was a friend and supporter of all the politicians of the cafés and the secret chambers, of bourgeois elements, of the kulak strata and reactionary clergy. He was, in fact, opposed to the socialist revolution, opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat in theory and practice.

On account of Sejfulla's endless hostile anti-Marxist stands and actions of this type, we rightly decided to condemn him at the 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in February 1946. But the motive for the condemnation of Sejfulla Malëshova was the obvious one, the party motive. I say this because now «someone else» was interested in his condemnation. This «someone else», first of all, was the Yugoslavs.

They exploited the anti-party tendencies of Sejfulla Malëshova for as long as it interested them and then, when they saw that he was becoming a nuisance to them, indeed with his pro-Western inclinations, he was even becoming dangerous, they agreed that he should be removed from the scene. On this occasion they satisfied mostly the ambitions of their main preference — Koçi Xoxa. With the elimination of Sejfulla Malëshova one competitor of Koçi Xoxe's for absolute power was removed. This was the main reason why Koçi Xoxe and, together with him, Nako Spiru, smiled their approval and expressed complete solidarity as soon as I put forward in the Bureau the necessity for holding the 5th Plenum. Long afterwards I was to learn the truth that they seized on my demand for the examination of Sejfulla Ma-

lëshova's grave mistakes and faults for other, essentially anti-party, interests and aims. Willy-nilly, on this occasion the Party came «to the aid» of Koçi and Nako to remove one of the rival partners from the scene. But, to give credit where credit is due, they themselves, willy-nilly, were to «assist» the Party with the host of facts which they were to present.

At that time, of course, I did not and could not know the true motives which inspired Koçi Xoxe in the attack against «opportunism», but I noticed that he was displaying great activity and day by day dug out from the dossiers new «arguments» against Sejfulla. Nako Spiru did not lag behind in this campaign, either. He continued his old game: through his people he gathered facts exposing Sejfulla and strove to outdo even Koçi Xoxe in the condemnation of the opportunist. At the 5th Plenum these two tried to appear as «the saviours of the situation». Within the sessions of the meeting, from what they said they seemed to be in solidarity with each other and with me and all the comrades of the Central Committee. This seemed to me like a good sign. Perhaps, I said to myself, the moment is coming to strengthen the unity so long desired and sought. Perhaps the comrades are beginning to understand where the orientation which Berat gave us might lead us and now are pulling themselves together. However, I was wrong and the first signs of this and my suspicions about it appeared right there at the Plenum. In their contributions and comments both Koçi and Nako confined all the evil to Sejfulla alone, only to the opportunist, but not to the opportunist spirit and tendency which had begun to appear after the Berat Plenum. Sejfulla was the most advanced, the banner-bearer of this alien anti-Marxist spirit, but if the analysis and criticism were to be concentrated on his person alone we were going to gain nothing. Why had this opportunist tendency entered amongst us? Where did it have its roots, causes, reasons? What factors assisted Sejfulla to flaunt his liberal tendencies so strongly?

Both Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru glided over or avoided

these essential questions. I had the unshakeable conviction that everything had its origin at Berat, in the unjust accusations of Velimir Stojnić about the alleged «sectarianism» in the line of the CPA, therefore, in the report which I delivered to the 5th Plenum I stated the cause of the evil openly. Naturally, in the report and in the remarks which I made I did not criticise either Stojnić or his «directives» directly. (Apart from other things, this would have been a mistaken step on my part, because in this way the possibility would have been given to Koçi, Nako and their comrades to attack me as «anti-Yugoslav», «sectarian», «incorrigible», etc.). However, I cautiously portrayed the mistakes of Sejfulla Malëshova on their true background of the «new», «broad» spirit about which we spoke at Berat.

«At Berat,» I stressed amongst other things, «we looked for sectarianism even where it did not exist and the question of sectarianism was raised as the greatest threat to the Party. This was fraught with great dangers because it brought about that a young Party, without long experience, like this Party of ours, leaned over in the other direction, to opportunist stands. Those who lost all sense of measure,» I stressed further on, «were the comrades who did not base themselves on the experience of the Party and who saw the 'sectarian' tendency everywhere in the past.»

This is not the place to dwell at length on the report I delivered at this Plenum (it has been published¹ and in itself is the first re-examination of the Berat Plenum), but I want to point out only that both Koçi and Nako, from beginning to end, avoided such a thorough analysis of things and this struck my eye.

«Why did they not describe the evil as they should?» I asked myself. «Can it be that they find it hard to admit that they were wrong at Berat? Why were they so frightened even at the mention of the 'Berat Plenum'?» My suspicions were growing that they were hiding something.

¹ See Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, Tirana 1974, vol. 1, pp. 447-518, Eng. ed.

Another feature which I did not like in the stands of Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru at the 5th Plenum was their mania to present themselves before the comrades of the Plenum as the «discoverers» of the danger and the «saviours of the situation.»

In his contribution and interventions Koçi Xoxe praised the role of the «cadres» he had around him, who, according to him, «had noticed» and brought up the question of Sejfulla's mistakes. After speaking about the «observations of cadres», Koçi turned on Sejfulla:

«You,» he told him, «wanted to convince us that no harm came from your line and you pushed the cadres aside. You have done us great harm. Control has been overlooked. We had no line on control, exercised no control. Control must be re-established...»

The «chief kadrovik» was preparing to take over the reins, to open the dossiers. Under the disguise of the struggle against enemy elements, who had come «under the influence of the opportunist line of Malëshova», Koçi Xoxe was to find ways to extend the line of «control», surveillance, persecution and punishment in all directions, especially against sound cadres in the Party and in the state.

Nako Spiru, for his part, gave all the «credit» to the «youth», to «intelligent comrades with a revolutionary spirit» who had «uncovered» Sejfulla Malëshova! He went so far as to openly oppose the youth to the Party.

«The comrades of the youth organization,» said Nako, «have shown themselves to be more vigilant than those of the Party in the direction of Sejfulla Malëshova. The youth organization is able to turn out capable cadres who can do any work and solve any problem!»

Naturally, both the cadres and the youth, educated by the Party, had done and were doing their own work in all fields and the Party guided, supported and assisted them with all its might. But the problem could by no means be presented as who «uncovered» Sejfulla Malëshova first, the youth or the Party, the cadres or the Party! Such divisions

and oppositions were impermissible and dangerous. The mistakes of Sejfulla Malëshova were uncovered by the Party, the working class, men of the people, among them the youth and the cadres. The mania for the divisions «the youth» and «the cadres» was incorrect and dangerous. Moreover, both in the Plenum and before and after it Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru regarded and presented the youth or the cadres respectively (with the cadres Koçi implied first of all the workers of the Security Service and then the people of the apparatus) as personal «sectors», where, according to them, not the directives of the Party, but the «leadership» of Koçi or Nako had a role. At the time of the Plenum we attacked these tendencies (to the extent they were manifested at those moments), but later we were to become clearer about the truth and to have fierce debates and clashes with Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru.

The mutual dislike and enmity between Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru was obvious at the Plenum. Although they were in solidarity in the condemnation of Sejfulla, the way in which they condemned him and presented the facts gave the impression that they were waging a kind of contest.

Later, all these things were to come clearly to light and it would be proved that both Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru did everything in the context of the struggle for personal power. I shall speak about this later. What is of interest here is the fact that at the 5th Plenum one of the most cunning and dangerous enemies was eliminated from our ranks. All the comrades sternly denounced Sejfulla Malëshova and, in one degree or another, it came out clearly that the roots of Sejfulla Malëshova's mistakes lay not simply in his personal tendencies, in his vacillating opportunist nature.

All these things were true, but the main thing is that, first, Sejfulla's tendencies found a basis for support in the «orientation» which Velimir Stojnić gave at Berat; second, in the unhealthy atmosphere which existed in our Political Bureau no barrier was raised to and no conditions were created for Sejfulla Malëshova's crooked inclinations to be nipped in the bud.

The 5th Plenum completely confirmed this truth. However, I was convinced that we would be hasty if we were to accept the «conclusion» of Koçi, Nako, Pandi Kristo and others that allegedly «now the evil has been eliminated» and «things will go well». No, the 5th Plenum only brought out where the source of the evil lay, cleaned up a part of this evil, but the roots remained where they had been. The wound could become infected again and cause us even greater damage.

This became clear immediately after the 5th Plenum. The first signs of the Koçi-Nako enmity, which had appeared in the second half of 1945, now began to get worse and emerge openly. The development of events was creating new situations: the quarrels between Nako and Koçi broke the isolation they had established around me after Berat and they began to come to me to «complain», to explain the situation and seek my intervention. More and more I was seeing that the «arguments» which they presented spoke more about the personal ambitions of each of them than about issues of principle in regard to our work or the line in general.

Of course these ambitions of theirs which seemed sickening to me, had prime importance for them, and the «advance» of one could not fail to worry the other.

The fact is that after Liberation, Koçi Xoxe was rising higher than Nako, although he had neither the culture nor the acumen of Nako. But Koçi was pushed ahead because the Yugoslavs placed importance in the «Macedonian» Koçi Xoxe, encouraged and boosted him, and in their plan it was he who had to become number one. Koçi began to dress as a «lieutenant general» and was minister of internal affairs and organizational secretary of the Party, like Ranković in Yugoslavia. He began to become arrogant, despotic, and posed as the man «who knows everything».

Nako Spiru watched this rapid rise of Koçi with astonishment and concern. He knew Xoxe's capacities, which were almost nil, and knew the general opinion which we had

of him, and so he was convinced that Koçi was being pushed ahead by somebody else, by an external force. Nako sensed that the Yugoslavs were leaving him in the lurch and his ambitions were not being realized. From this point, without doubt, began Nako's cooling off towards the Yugoslavs and his orientation towards someone «more powerful». But about this I shall speak later. At first, Nako advanced in his quarrels with Koçi with the aim of undermining this situation through methods and forms not in the party spirit, but in the spirit of intrigue which characterized him, and with factional work.

Nako's «waves» began to break closer to me, but not openly and sincerely, not by opening his heart to me and disclosing what he had done, but always using the pretext of current work to criticize Koçi. And Koçi behaved in the same way against Nako. From all this I observed that their «unity» at Berat was breaking up and the tendencies were for the formation of two groups — the group of Koçi, Pandi and Kristo Themelko (who after Berat became the Yugoslavs' men¹ completely), and the group

1 Under the influence of Koçi Xoxe and the pressure and secret activity of the Titoites, Kristo Themelko, too, after the Berat Plenum joined in the anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian activity of the Belgrade leaders and their agents in Albania. When the Titoite betrayal came to light and the plot which the Yugoslavs had hatched up against the freedom and independence of our country was discovered and foiled, Kristo Themelko admitted his grave faults and mistakes and made self-criticism. With his stand he helped the CPA uncover more thoroughly the secret threads of the plot hatched up by the Yugoslav leadership and its agents, Koçi Xoxe and company. Therefore, only party measures were taken towards Kristo Themelko (he was dismissed from the Political Bureau, to which he was co-opted in the summer of 1946 and expelled from the CC of the CPA) and he was given a helping hand to correct his previous faults and mistakes through his work and correct stand. Kristo Themelko highly evaluated the magnanimous and benevolent stand of the Party towards him and mustered all his forces to honourably carry out the tasks he was charged with in important sectors of the economy of our country. For his good work and stand in a party spirit he was, among other things, decorated by the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the PRA.

of Nako Spiru with his cronies of the youth — Liri Belishova, Fadil Pagrami and others. As for Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova, up till the end of 1945 they were «neutral», or inclined more towards Sejfulla, and after Sejfulla was attacked, they stayed on the sideline.

Meanwhile, many other events in this spirit took place before our eyes and when I considered them, they all focussed on one point, on a single source — the Berat Plenum. So I considered that the moment had come to raise the question in the Political Bureau and that is what I did. As is known, I summarized my opinions on these matters, on the cause and the source of them in a document for the Political Bureau, a document which is known as «The Theses for the Re-examination of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the Party»¹. These theses were published in full many years ago, so there is no need to outline them again. I want only to point out that on this occasion, that is, in the spring of 1946, I put forward the conclusion openly and officially in the Political Bureau that the main author of the grave mistakes of the 2nd Plenum was the Yugoslav emissary, Velimir Stojnić, that all his «theses» and «directives» were wrong and our comrades' support for them had brought about all the grave subsequent developments. I considered that pointing out the danger of these actions, which had caused and were causing divisions, was a necessary action on my part to save the Party from a further split. On the other hand, it was essential and urgent to tell the comrades that Marxist-Leninist unity in the leadership did not exist, a thing which endangered the unity of the whole Party and the people, therefore, this unity absolutely must be established in the leadership of the Party and first of all there where it was lacking, in the Bureau.

In a working discussion I suggested my idea to Koçi and Nako, but they jumped straight up in the air.

¹ See Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, Tirana 1974, vol. 1, pp. 543-575, Eng. ed.

«Why should we go into an analysis of past events?» asked Koçi almost innocently. «Berat was about the war. That time has ended. Moreover, the 5th Plenum put matters in order for the first two years of peace, we have no reason to go into an analysis.»

Nako Spiru raised the same opposition, the same arguments.

«I'm sorry,» I told them, «but even after the 5th Plenum sharp disagreements are occurring amongst us. You know this better than anyone.»

They both hung their heads and blushed. They did not like it that I brought out openly that each of them was coming to me to complain about the other.

«If we have some disagreements they are over daily matters,» Koçi Xoxe tried to get out of the difficulty.

«No,» I said, «the way you have presented the matters to me they go deeper than that. Unity is lacking in our leadership and I insist that we must examine the roots of the evil where they lie — in the Berat Plenum. We must discuss this seriously in the Bureau.»

«Since you insist, let the three of us, you, Nako and I get together,» said Koçi Xoxe. «There's no reason to involve the other comrades in what occurred at Berat.»

These words made a deep impression on me.

«Why?» I asked. «Did anything occur there that the others should not know? They were at the Plenum...»

«They were, but not as members of the Bureau,» said Nako Spiru coming to the aid of his rival and enemy. «Better let the three of us discuss the matter.»

This unexpected «solidarity» of these two, at a time when it was known that they were ready to tear at each other's throats, increased my suspicions. Then I said flatly and sternly:

«I shall not permit a second Berat. We are not going to meet alone again to discuss or decide in the name of the Bureau. I'm ready to present my opinions to the Bureau for analysis.»

They were obliged to agree, but the fact that they were shocked was quite obvious. So I presented my opinions in the form of theses, telling the comrades of the Bureau right from the outset that my main concern was the lack of unity in the Bureau and that we should discuss this to find the causes and improve the situation.

At the same time I turned to Koçi Xoxe and Nako, saying:

«My conviction is that everything began from the time when we were preparing for the 2nd Plenum and it was fully developed at this Plenum. That is where we must seek the roots of the evil. Therefore, especially you, Comrades Koçi and Nako, and you Pandi, too, must make clear to us: why did you take a stand opposed to the line of the Party at Berat, why did you criticize the Party, from what positions did you proceed, were you subject to outside influences, and do you still stand by your former opinions?! I do not ask this in order to confront you with your responsibility,» I stressed, «but so that both you and we will be clear, will thoroughly recognize the mistakes, will correct ourselves through bolshevik criticism and self-criticism and radically improve the situation.»

After this the discussion began. Both of them put up a stubborn resistance, using the justification that «at Berat we attacked the manifestations, not the line», that «we did not want to distort the past», that «perhaps we went too far, but without evil aims», etc.

I proved with arguments that such excuses did not hold water. I reminded them of the unfair and unscrupulous interference which they engaged in on the report I delivered, but Nako forestalled the evil. He put all the blame on Sejfulla Malëshova.

«That's right, Sejfulla confused us with his theories,» Koçi Xoxe expressed his «solidarity» with Nako. «He said that it should be a weighty report and we left this matter to him.»

We carried on like this for two or three nights on end,

trying to arrive at the truth, but Koçi, Pandi and Nako Spiru swerved away from every truth.

Both during the years of the war and in this period we held the meetings of the Bureau at night. Mostly we met in my home, isolated one of the rooms which I used for work, and frequently continued the discussion till early morning. The occasions were by no means rare (not only when we discussed Berat, but also before and after this), when the debate took the form of a quarrel and voices were raised so high that not only the people of my household, but also the odd passer-by in the street could hear them. (At that time the street in front of the house where I lived and still live was not closed and anybody, good or bad, could walk past freely.)

We had moments of bitter arguments this time, too, only I must point out that Nako, Koçi and Pandi Kristo had lowered their tone to an extent rarely seen before. They were in «the defensive» and wanted to get over everything «quietly», like «angels», to avoid letting anything untoward slip out as tempers rose.

As usual Bedri and Tuk at first opened their eyes wide in amazement at the things they heard, and then, when they took the floor, did not know whom to support and whom to attack. I remained alone facing the three of them and I realized that in such a situation no progress could be made. I proposed that we should extend the ranks of the Political Bureau with new comrades whose words and opinions ought to help to clear up this problem and to change the situation for the better.

«First let us finish this analysis,» said Koçi Xoxe, «and then attend to that. There is no need to involve others in this story.»

«You can see that without calling in new comrades we are not going to get out of this situation,» I replied to Xoxe. «Let us increase the ranks of the Bureau and have the opinion and judgment of new comrades — there's nothing wrong with that, it's all to the good.»

The argument broke out again. Koçi, Nako and Pandi were especially opposed to bringing new comrades into the Bureau immediately. «Later, perhaps it can be done,» they said:

We left the meeting for the next night (it was extremely late), when we were to continue the discussion about my theses and make the proposals for enlarging the Bureau.

The next day, however, everything was suspended: unexpectedly, «good» news reached us from Belgrade. Nako Spiru with two or three comrades, cadres of the economy, were urgently required to examine problems of importance for our country and for Albanian-Yugoslav relations. The Yugoslav mission in Tirana informed us «joyfully» that all measures had been taken: the tickets were ready, the seats in the aircraft reserved. «All that was required was that Comrade Nako Spiru should leave as quickly as possible!»

I was pleased, too, but this unexpected news also surprised me. We ourselves had long been seeking talks with the Yugoslav leadership on problems of mutual relations, especially in the economic field, but no concrete reply had been given us. «The comrades are busy,» Josip Djerdja told us. «As soon as they are free they will welcome you. We are friends, we understand each other's problems, so don't worry.»

And now the way was open! And when?! Precisely when we were at the climax of the debates over the re-examination of a grave mistake of the past! What a coincidence!

However, it was to be proved that it was not a coincidence at all! The «kindly» but «withdrawn» stand from «afar» of the Yugoslav comrades had come to an end. Apparently they had been informed about what was occurring in our Bureau. They sensed the danger that the crust of the pie might be opened, that the plot they had hatched up at Berat might be discovered, and they took measures immediately. The first step was the urgent summoning of Nako Spiru to Belgrade. We sent him off the next day or the day after, giving him the relevant instructions, and a few days after he had gone I said to the comrades:

«Let us continue the meeting.»

«Without Nako?» said Koçi in a shocked tone. «No, that cannot be done. He's involved in this and must be there to speak for himself. He could complain that we have talked behind his back. As you know, he accuses me for nothing.»

«Very well,» I said, «we shall wait for Nako to return and then continue.»

Meanwhile from Belgrade Nako sent us good tidings one after the other.

The first thing that Kardelj and Djilas had «advised» as soon as they met him was the indefinite postponement of the date which we had set at the 5th Plenum for holding the 1st Congress of the CPA.¹ «We are still not holding our congress,» the gentlemen had told him, «let alone you who are without experience.» They had put forward a whole bunch of «difficulties» (the preparation of reports and resolutions, what we would put forward, how we would organize it, what we would say about our line, how we would come out: legally or illegally, etc., etc.). and then had said:

«Wait till we hold our congress, see how we do it, prepare the materials and bring them here for us to look them over, and then decide whether or not you're going to hold your congress. As for the way in which you organize it,» they had added, «we think that the congress should be held in secrecy, in illegality, to avoid annoying both internal and external reaction! This is what we did with the Congress of the CP of Serbia.»²

I had never been in agreement with such «advice» of the Yugoslav comrades, but in particular their insistence on concealing the existence of the Party seemed to me a thing as ludicrous and absurd as it was dangerous. However, my opposition in the Bureau ran up against the «unity» of other comrades who, not only repeated the «arguments» of Kardelj and Djilas, but also «discovered» others and raised them as

1 The 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA decided that the 1st Congress of the Party would commence in Tirana on May 25, 1946.

2 This Congress was held in illegality in Belgrade from 8-12 May, 1945.

a barricade against me in order to have their way. As for the postponement of the holding of the congress, we would have done this even without the «suggestion» of the Yugoslav comrades, but for quite different reasons and motives from those Kardelj and Djilas presented. The congress was going to be postponed because we were still not reaching agreement in the Bureau in order to find the roots of the evil and were waiting for Nako so we could continue the discussion further.

As far as I remember Nako returned from Belgrade in May and meanwhile I had begun to put the ideas which I had presented to the earlier meetings about the re-examination of Berat in better order and prepared them in writing in the form of a report. This was the final variant (the one that has been published) which at the beginning of June 1946 I distributed to the comrades of the Bureau to read and study.

«It is better this way,» I told them. «We must not get lost again in endless discussions as we did the first time. We must all prepare ourselves seriously and speak.»

A few days later the meeting recommenced. Again the earlier pressure, only this time the phrases and «arguments» of Koçi and Nako were more «measured», more «studied», and even contained a little «self-criticism». As the first step this was something. Let us carry further.

But we could not continue. An urgent radiogram arrived for me. Hysni Kapo, who was our ambassador to Yugoslavia at that time, sent it to me. «Marko» (Ranković continued to use his wartime pseudonym) had summoned him and had informed him that this time they urgently awaited Enver Hoxha in Belgrade! Now they were only awaiting word from me whether or not I agreed to go «at the earliest possible moment» to Belgrade, where they were to give me a «majestic» welcome.¹

1 «Marko told me,» wrote Hysni Kapo, among other things, «that it would be good if Enver came as quickly as possible, perhaps on Sunday. Only your opinion is awaited. They will put at your disposal as many aircraft as you need for your trip. They intend to give you a majestic welcome.» (*Radiogram of June 19, 1946, CAP.*)

Without doubt the news pleased me and I accepted the «conditions», that is, that I should go «as quickly as possible». Only look — what a coincidence again and over the same problem: when we put forward in the Bureau the re-examination of Berat for the first time the friends urgently summoned Nako and now, as soon as we started the meeting left unfinished, they summoned me!

However, this was not a coincidence, either. Without doubt, Koçi Xoxe had again signalled his employers about my insistence and they found the remedy. To ensure that I left «as soon as possible» they mentioned the names of Tito, Djilas and Stalin himself! Of course, they offered me «as many aircraft as I wanted» and «a majestic welcome» if only I would leave!

When the news reached me I was truly disturbed that an essential analysis would be left half-way through again, but nevertheless I considered my visit to Belgrade a thing of importance for our work, both for our relations with Yugoslavia and on the international plane. So we left Berat unfinished again. In front of us was Belgrade. It was asking for us urgently.

IV

WITH TITO

Tito's unexpected invitation to go to Belgrade ■ Official talks between the Albanian and Yugoslav delegations. Discussion of the question of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia ■ Tito aims to gobble up the whole of the Balkans ■ Policy of extermination in Kosova ■ Tito's haughtiness and scandalous luxury ■ About the visits in Croatia and Slovenia ■ Ceremony in the Presidium of the Yugoslav Skupština ■ A meeting with Tito in Bled. «Naš Tito» or «Duce a noi!»? ■ On the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid ■ «Aid» in driblets.

We had proposed to the Yugoslav comrades some considerable time before that we send a top-level government delegation, headed by me, to Yugoslavia. Through the visit of this official delegation there we aimed to take another important step towards further strengthening the relations of mutual friendship between our countries, peoples and parties and towards raising the prestige of our countries in the international arena, and to utilize the possibilities which would be created to hold top-level discussions on various problems of a political, economic and other character, which presented common interest.

The Yugoslav leadership replied that it agreed in principle

to welcome the top-level delegation at the appropriate moment, but months went by and the answer remained positive only in «principle». They justified this delay with the many problems and difficulties they had, and without doubt, there was a real basis for this excuse. At the same time, however, we noticed something else: on the one hand, the Yugoslav comrades were «extremely busy» with work and problems, and «could not receive» the delegation headed by me «quickly», while on the other hand, Djilas, Kardelj and Tito himself found the time to welcome and hold long talks with our youth delegations or working groups which went there and even found time to receive Liri Gega! Here I am not speaking about Koçi Xoxe, Nako Spiru or Sejfulla Malëshova (before he was condemned), who, when they went to Belgrade, were given such welcomes that Koçi «could not find words to describe them»!

Nevertheless, we continued to justify their failure to receive me on the grounds that Nako Spiru put forward, that perhaps «the high rank» of the delegation required a great deal of preliminary preparation(!); perhaps such a visit should be made at an important national or international moment, perhaps...

Many other «surmises» similar to these (each of them has a basis) could be listed, but I think that the main reason for the delay in accepting the visit of our delegation to Belgrade lay elsewhere: perhaps the Yugoslav leadership did not want the first top-level official delegation to be headed by me! After the mines which they laid at Berat they expected that I would be quickly eliminated from the leadership (they knew that in the Bureau which emerged from Berat I was one against four, if not one against six comrades), and consequently, they were awaiting my replacement, so the delegation would be headed by the person who was to take my place, their greatest friend, Koçi Xoxe.

I base this hypothesis not only on the countless facts which proved that the Yugoslav leadership wanted to eliminate me at Berat, and since this was proved impossible there,

afterwards. I base this hypothesis on a whole mass of other facts, amongst which the feverish efforts of Tito and company to hinder and, if possible, to sabotage the visits of a delegation of ours at the same level to Stalin in Moscow, to Dimitrov in Bulgaria, etc.

As I said, at that time there were many things we did not know, therefore, we could only wait. And precisely when we had begun to discuss in the Bureau «The theses for the re-examination of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA», the news came that the road to Belgrade had been opened to us.

We left off all the work we had in hand, and since the time before our departure was very short, we once again went over the matters which we would discuss with the Yugoslav leadership and Tito.

At those moments we, like all the other countries of people's democracy, were faced with the question that our economy should not be spontaneous, but organized, that is, a planned socialist economy. Despite our great poverty inherited from the past and from the war, we had commenced such a thing by carrying out a series of major transforming socio-economic reforms on the correct Marxist-Leninist course. We knew that for the construction of socialism we had to base ourselves, first of all, on our internal forces, but, especially in that initial phase, the co-operation and aid of foreign friends was necessary and indispensable for us.

Apart from other things, in this cardinal field which required endless forces and energies, we lacked not only means and funds, but also experience. We studied the Marxist-Leninist literature, the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, the written experience of the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union, though, understandably, this could not be learned from books alone. We had even taken the first steps in practice, but this was still only the very beginning. In the 5th Plenum of the CC of the Party, in particular, the necessity of defining and consistently pursuing a correct policy for the socialist transformation of the country was stressed

with the greatest force. It was decided that the economy should be developed according to a plan which must be carefully prepared with our own forces, but we felt it necessary to consult with our friends about the drafting of the plan. These things, then, were to constitute one of the main questions which our delegation was to discuss with the Yugoslav leadership and Tito. As I said, Nako had been summoned there in April and he had held some talks with Yugoslav comrades specialized in the economy and so certain preliminary work on this problem had been done. The aim of our delegation in regard to this problem was to seek the aid of the Yugoslav comrades to build up an economic plan with a perspective of at least two years, for the time being, in order to proceed towards a five-year plan.

We had reached agreement with the Yugoslavs to hold discussion and decide, first of all, on the signing of a treaty of friendship and mutual aid between the two countries, a thing which we considered a major success for our policy, economy and defence. On this question our preparations had been made with great seriousness because of the great interest which the friendly relations of our two allied socialist countries presented, on account of our further economic development, and the joint defence of our two socialist countries bordering to the west and the south on enemy states and being, at the same time, two states of people's democracy, members of the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union.

We were going abroad for the first time as representatives of a people's government, of course, to a friendly country, and we had considered it our first duty to express to our friends, both the Yugoslav people and their leadership, the pure feelings of sincere friendship of our people, and tell them of our objective reality. On the basis of this reality, as well as their real situation, which they would have to present to us just as we would, we would put forward our requests and possibilities, would discuss them openly and sincerely, and take decisions in the common interest.

In the very close and sincere relations which (as we

thought at that time) existed between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and between Stalin and Tito, we saw another reason which rejoiced us about the meeting we were to have with Tito. We had the impression and belief that «Tito reaches agreement and consults with Stalin over everything», etc., an impression which was strengthened by the Soviet people who were in Tirana, let alone the Yugoslavs themselves. Therefore, at that time we thought that everything which we discussed and decided with Tito would be known to Stalin and he would be in agreement with us. Since it was impossible to have any contact with Stalin at that time (through the Soviet legation, which as far as I remember had just been opened in Tirana, and through no fault of ours, direct Soviet-Albanian relations were very weak), we thought that the meeting with Tito would be, you might say, a transmission and an elaboration of the view of Stalin, too.

What Hysni had written in his radiogram that «Tito had reached agreement with Stalin who had welcomed a visit of our delegation to Belgrade», further fostered the hope that through the mouth of Tito we would hear the opinions and advice of Stalin.

Of course, on all the problems which we were going to discuss and decide we had our own line, our own views, our own opinions, and we were convinced of their correctness. We were not begging even for the treaty of friendship and mutual aid, which we sought, and would not permit the slightest infringement of the vital interests of our socialist Homeland. We had shed our blood precisely so that there would be no repetition of the past. At that time, we believed that the Yugoslavs, too, had the same stand.

We had prepared ourselves, also, to portray to the Yugoslav comrades the international situation seen from our standpoint in the circumstances of that time, especially in regard to the situation and inimical subversive activities which the Greek monarcho-fascists were carrying out on our southern borders and the Italian neo-fascists, assisted by the Anglo-Americans, were carrying out on our maritime border

and in our airspace. We wanted to give the Yugoslav friends a clear picture of the very sound internal political situation, of the steel links of the Party with the people, and of the successes and shortcomings which we had in our work. Any fog or unclarity caused by the biased reports in a non-objective spirit, which those who did not want the development of the friendship between our two countries to proceed on the right course had certainly made, should be cleared from the minds of the Yugoslav comrades. Naturally, we were prepared to gain as much as possible from the organizational experience of the councils, the Party, the economy, and the army in Yugoslavia, experience which at that time we considered necessary. The comrades who had to prepare themselves especially on these questions and who were to take part in the delegation were appointed and, as far as I remember, apart from me, the delegation was made up of Nako Spiru, Myslim Peza, our ambassador at Belgrade, Hysni Kapo, and others.

Finally, we thought we should take a gift to Tito. We racked our brains about what to take, because we did not want to be disgraced, but we could find nothing suitable. I suggested to the comrades we might take him one of the old silver-chased Albanian pistols. This would do very well and the comrades approved the idea. We summoned Sterio Gjo-koreci and charged him with finding one. He told us that during the confiscation of the property of a quisling criminal they had found three beautiful pistols from which we could choose. We told him to bring them to us and when he brought them, the representative of Yugoslavia, Josip Djerdja, was in my office. They really were beautiful pistols. I chose one and told the Yugoslav why I wanted it. He looked at it, liked it immensely and without the slightest shame said:

«Tito will be immensely pleased, send him the three!»

What could we say to this greedy collector?! We accepted his proposal. (In this way Tito got the three silver-chased pistols and put them in his arsenal of gifts.)

But another detail had escaped us: I did not have a

proper general's uniform! I said I would go in civilian clothes, but the comrades insisted that as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, I must also take the military uniform of a general. I had an ordinary uniform, but we had not such things as «dress uniforms». Hence, we had to invent one, from the shiny boots to the braided cap. We had the boots and the blue trousers made with a wide red stripe, but how were we to manage the jacket! I summoned Sokolov (the Soviet military attaché in Tirana) to my office and asked him:

«Do you have a spare jacket?»

«Why?» he asked me.

«Don't ask,» I said, «but let me try on your jacket!»

When I put it on I saw that it was too tight, then I explained the fix I was in. Sokolov said to me:

«I've a piece of material for a uniform. I'll send it to you, and if you like it, make a jacket and a cap.»

And so the question of the «dress uniform» was settled, too. We awaited the date which we had set for our departure and from the «unlimited» number of aircraft which were put at our disposal, I asked for only one. Indeed, I said to Djerdja, «If it's difficult for you, five to six seats in the regular plane will do.»

«What are you talking about!» said Djerdja. «You can have as many planes as you like. A special aircraft will come.»

The aircraft came and the first delegation of the Government of the People's Republic of Albania set out for Belgrade on a friendly visit.¹

Looking down from the aircraft on the territory of Montenegro and other regions of Yugoslavia I thought with deep grief and great respect of the hundreds of my partisan comrades who were killed in these parts while fighting the German nazis. On the order which I issued from Berat on the

1 The visit of the government delegation of the PR of Albania, headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha, to the FR of Yugoslavia continued from June 23 to July 2, 1946.

eve of the complete liberation of Albania two divisions of young men and women of Albania crossed the border and won fame in those parts for their heroism, self-sacrifice, discipline, internationalism and fighting skill, in fierce battles with the occupiers. Sitting in the aircraft I thought about those dear Albanian mothers who unhesitatingly sent their sons and daughters to join in the war for the liberation of the Homeland, a war which required these sons and daughters, educated by the Party of communists, to think about and go to shed their blood for the freedom of the neighbouring peoples, too. Thousands returned from these heroic battles, but hundreds fell on the battlefield in the territory of Yugoslavia, and at those moments I thought about the hundreds of Albanian mothers who were waiting for us to bring the sacred remains of their sons and daughters home. «We shall do it!» I said to myself, «It is our duty! They will lie in the most beautiful places in the Homeland where the generations will sing to their glory and heroism throughout history.»¹

The aircraft reached Belgrade and we were looking down on the capital. Josip Djerdja tried to point something out to me, but I could not distinguish anything clearly, because it was not easy to recognize things in a city which I was visiting for the first time. Besides this, we were especially excited in anticipation of meeting Tito and the other comrades of the Yugoslav leadership for the first time. Then, we were over the airport and came down on the runway, the aircraft taxied to a halt and the door was opened. We saw that there were many people there to meet us, soldiers, and a military band. We had never been through such ceremonies; these things were unknown to us, and we would have to take care to make no mistakes in the so-called rules of protocol. We walked forward and Tito came towards us. He held out his

1 The remains of hundreds of our martyrs who fell in Kosova, Montenegro and elsewhere were brought back to Albania and buried in the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation or in the martyrs' cemeteries of the respective districts in 1947 and in 1975.

hand and gripped ours firmly. We thought that we would embrace as is our custom. But no. Different rules and customs. These things made no impression on us. I introduced all the comrades in turn to Tito and we heard the strains of our national anthem. We stood at attention and after our national anthem, the Yugoslav anthem was played, too. Then, Tito took me to his right and we reviewed the guard of honour. «The soldiers are like ours,» I said to myself, «brave former partisans.» Their uniforms were better than ours and their weapons newer, Soviet ones. Ours had been captured from the enemy. Then, Tito introduced us to the Yugoslav personalities who had come out at the airport, and at the other meetings also introduced me to other personalities of the Yugoslav party and government. Most of them (with the exception of Djilas who had once passed through Albania in transit) we were seeing for the first time: Kardelj, Vlahov, Ranković, Simić, Pijade, Popović, Jovanović, Kidrić, etc. Passing through Belgrade, our column of cars arrived at Dedinje which was to be our residence.

«An exceptionally great honour!» murmured Djerdja. «This is Dedinje where Tito himself has his main residence!»

As they told us, and as we saw later, he lived and worked in the main palace of the former kraljs of Serbia. As the column of cars drove slowly through the streets of the park, Djerdja pointed out a building.

«There,» he said, «that's the White Palace, the palace of the former kings. Now we have it, Tito has it!»

The cars went a little further through the park and stopped.

«The palace of the former prince regent!» Djerdja told me. «Now you are going to stay there.»

I did not place any great importance on these details or on many other courtesies which were paid to our delegation, but which Josip Djerdja described as «important, exceptional», and so on. With this he wanted to convince us and give the impression that «exceptional care and affection» was being displayed for Albania and that, allegedly, these

things and the measures which were taken for our delegation were not intended for other delegations. Naturally, the Yugoslav ambassador in Tirana had been charged with this task of adding to the lustre of things.

After we had rested (I don't remember clearly whether it was the same day or the next), they told us that we were to pay a courtesy visit to Tito in the White Palace. For the Yugoslavs who were constantly hovering around us the question was extremely complicated: How were we going to dress for this visit to Tito? Don't dress in this suit, nor in that suit. Even then protocol had begun its work in «Tito's court». For us, however, the problem was quite simple. We had two suits each: the famous military uniform, of which I spoke earlier, and a civilian suit. Therefore, we dressed in civilian suits. After all, we were going to visit a comrade who was a communist as we were! And we set out to walk through the park.

Guards dressed in spick and span uniforms, and armed with automatic rifles were placed all round the palace. «Why all these guards?» I asked myself, when I recalled that only two partisans guarded my house and at that time people went freely up and down the street in front of it. However, I quickly found the «reason»: «It's a big country, Tito is a great personality and they are quite right to guard him like this.» In front of the palace there was a guard of honour, in the halls of the palace everything had been foreseen, from a clothes brush down to a man who wiped the dust from our shoes gathered during the walk through the park. «Apparently you have to be all 'dolled up' to see Tito!» I said to myself. «Just think, all these heroes who are wiping your shoes and bowing and scraping all round you, were waging the war and living as partisans up till a year or so ago!»

We entered the great chamber of the palace. Luxurious. Tito was standing alone under a picture at the head of the chamber, dressed in his white marshal's uniform, with gold-embroidered collar and cuffs, with stars on his epaulettes, and a considerable number of medal ribbons on his chest. To the left of him came a series of comrades, one after the other,

members of the Political Bureau of the CPY and ministers; antique French armchairs of 17th and 18th century style lined both sides and there were beautiful Persian carpets in the middle of the chamber. From the door of the chamber to its head, till we reached and shook hands with Tito, who did not move from his position, we seemed to walk a kilometre.

After he sat down, they brought in cigarettes and drinks. Tito proposed a toast to the friendship between our two peoples, and to our health, asked some general questions about our country, the weather, the crops, the olives and the oranges. We thanked him, delivered the greetings of our people, Party and army and said good-bye. The first protocol audience with Tito did not last more than half an hour. Josip Djerdja did not fail to tell us that it «went off very well» and kept up his refrain with such words as «marvellous», «exceptionally cordial», «audiences with Tito rarely go like this», etc.

Of course, protocol required that Tito should return the visit to us, but he did not do this. Other comrades came in his place, telling us that Tito «begged our pardon because a very urgent and important matter had cropped up,» etc., etc. But at that time these things made no impression on us, and we had no knowledge of protocol. Besides, we had Josip Djerdja with us and he found the «reason» for everything. The important thing for us was when we were to hold the working discussions with the Yugoslav comrades to solve a series of problems and get things moving.

The day for the discussions was set.

As I said above, we were prepared for these discussions. From the Yugoslav side, Tito headed the delegation. In my speech, which we had prepared in Tirana, I tried to be as concise, objective and realistic as possible. The problems of our country at that time were very grave and difficult to solve, but in themselves the problems were not complicated. We were aware that everything could not be solved with a wave of the magic wand and that we could not make demands on Yugoslavia beyond its possibilities. The economic questions were what concerned us, first of all, and here we wanted

them to give us aid on credit. We needed the credits we requested for the development of agriculture and industry. In agriculture we were in a bad way even for the simplest agricultural tools, from iron plough-shares to harrows and cultivators. Naturally, we asked them also to give us some tractors and other agricultural machinery, from those they received from the Soviet Union, from UNRRA and elsewhere, to supply us with some seeds of grain and industrial crops and other such things. As can be seen, our requests were modest requests of the poor, but what else could we do!

In regard to industry, we told the Yugoslavs about our truly deplorable situation. Our country had inherited nothing apart from some backward handicraft workshops which we still kept going. Those few small, old factories, worn out and damaged by the war, we repaired to the extent we could, but it is understandable how short we were of spare parts for those old machines, for those old vehicles, in those conditions when we did not have even one plant that could really be called an engineering plant. Everything that existed in the country we had got working with our own forces and now it all had to be kept going, patched up and supplemented, because our needs were increasing.

The problem of the further development of the mines was important for our economy and we had to rely heavily on the development and exploitation of them. Therefore, we sought the aid of the Yugoslavs for the further development of industry, for the extraction of oil, bitumen, chromite, copper, etc. We sought aid, of course within the possibilities, for the setting up of some small factories of light industry to fulfil the urgent and essential needs of our country.

While outlining the international situation and telling them what was happening on our southern borders, I put before the Yugoslav comrades and Tito our view about the need to sign a treaty between our two countries, a treaty of friendship and mutual aid such as Yugoslavia had signed with the other countries of people's democracy. I argued that this treaty was very necessary, especially for the de-

fence of the freedom, independence and sovereignty of the PRA from the permanent ambitions of the imperialists, the Greek monarcho-fascists and Italian neo-fascists. I stressed that this treaty would further temper the sincere friendship between our two peoples and, like the other treaties of the countries of people's democracy with the Soviet Union and with one another, would serve to strengthen our countries. I also told the Yugoslav comrades and Tito about the great love and loyalty which our people, Party and army nurtured for the Soviet Union and the great Stalin.

While I was speaking Tito took some notes on a notebook and smoked cigarettes continuously, using a cigarette holder in the form of a pipe. He wore glasses and always sat serious, with furrowed brow as though deep in thought. It seemed that he was listening with attention. From time to time he filled the glass he had in front of him and drank mineral water. When I had finished, we took a break and went to a room where a buffet was richly spread with everything, from cakes and sandwiches to Šljivovica and soft drinks. There Tito began to talk, to crack jokes and laugh with his comrades about unimportant things to pass the time; the interpreters translated to us. Later I found these jokes and talks of Tito with Moša Pijade identical with those of Khrushchev with Mikoyan, who went on and on with such things when they were together.

After the break the meeting recommenced and Tito took the floor. He outlined the international situation at that period, attacking the imperialists and reactionary governments. He put great stress on the «major» role which socialist Yugoslavia played, not simply in the Balkans, but also in Europe and especially in the countries of people's democracy, of course, «after the Soviet Union», as he stressed. We noticed nothing suspicious in what he said, apart from the «majestic» tone in which he said it, the «authoritarian» words and the special importance he gave matters by saying, «I said this to one» and «I said that to another».

He also briefly outlined the history of the war against

the Germans and against General Draža Mihailović and the government in exile in London. Here he did not fail to point out «the skill and cunning of Churchill» with whom he had clashed over the question of Venezia Giulia which was still under discussion.

He did not dwell at length on the economic problems of Yugoslavia, saying only, «we have many difficulties», and went on to our question, in regard to which he said: «Despite these difficulties, we must assist you to the limit of our possibilities.» Tito said that from their side they would appoint Comrade Boris Kidrić.

«Appoint your comrade,» he said, «and let them examine your economic problems one by one and present them to us to take a decision.»

We agreed that Nako Spiru, who had come to Yugoslavia precisely on such problems in April, should continue this work. At that time we had Nako Spiru as minister of the economy and chairman of the State Planning Commission and, by appointing him to take part directly in the talks with the Yugoslavs on the economic problems, we showed what great importance we gave these problems.

After we talked about the development of education and culture in our country and I put forward some requests in this direction, too, especially about sending a number of Albanian students to the University of Belgrade, Tito asked me what I thought about the solution of the problem of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia. After a moment's silence to sum up our views on this important problem so that I could present them in the most complete and concise way, I said:

«You know about the historical injustices which the various imperialists and Great-Serb reaction have done to Albania. You also know the principled stands of our Party during the National Liberation War and the desire of our people for friendship with the peoples of Yugoslavia.»

I went on to express to Tito the opinion of the Albanian side that Kosova and the other regions in Yugoslavia, inhabited

by Albanians, belonged to Albania and should be returned to it.

«The Albanians fought,» I told him, «in order to have a free and sovereign Albania with which the Albanian regions in Yugoslavia should now be united. The time has come for this national problem to be solved justly by our parties.»

President Tito replied:

«I am in agreement with your view, but for the time being we cannot do this, because the Serbs would not understand us.»

After this Tito went on to another problem, that of the so-called «Balkan Federation» and sought my opinion on this matter.

«There has been an idea on this question for a long time,» I replied. «Albanian democrats and anti-Zogites, including some communists in exile, had come into contact with the Comintern and had formed the political organization KONARE¹.

«In contact with Comrade Dimitrov, this organization had adopted the Comintern's idea about a 'Balkan Confederation' and propagated this. This idea in principle was more in connection with the fighting collaboration of the working class and peoples of the Balkans against feudal monarchic regimes. The perspective of this issue was unclear and hopeless.

«When I, personally, was a student in the Lyceum of Korça, but more particularly, when I went to study in France, I had the opportunity to read the KONARE newspaper *Liria Kombëtare* as well as occasional numbers of the magazine *La Fédération Balcanique*. Occasionally, they mentioned the idea of the 'Balkan Federation' but always as a question or slogan of the future.

«When we began the National Liberation War and in the course of the war, we never thought about this problem and this idea was replaced with the common war of the peoples of the Balkans against the nazi-fascist occupiers. When Sej-

1 National Revolutionary Committee.

fulla Malëshova returned from exile he talked in theory about the problem of the 'Balkan Confederation' or 'Federation'.

«In principle we considered this idea correct and now the prospect for it was not so hopeless. But it required a great deal of work and, first of all, required victory in the war against the nazi-fascist occupiers.

«We still have this opinion, but the situation has to mature, we have to do a great deal of work to overcome the old enmities and we would like you to explain this important question to us more clearly, because we do not know your view or that of the Bulgarians or the Greeks.»

Tito listened to me very attentively and, when I had finished, said:

«I understood you very well, Comrade Enver, and agree with what you said. We, too, have been and are in agreement that this federation should be formed, have made and will make concrete efforts, but, as you said, the problem is difficult, cannot be solved immediately and does not depend only on us. For our part, at the proper time we shall come out with concrete proposals and will examine all the possible ways, but in our hearts we want to build the federation. The example and experience of the new Federal Yugoslavia will assist greatly in this direction. However, let us leave this problem for today. I mentioned it more because we were talking about the future of Kosova. Within the 'Balkan Federation' the question of uniting Kosova with Albania would be very much easier.»

«Undoubtedly!» I said. «But we always stand by what we mentioned at the outset: Whether or not the possibilities for a 'Balkan Federation' are created is one problem, while the solution of the question of Kosova is another problem entirely. As you yourself said, work must be done to solve the question of Kosova justly.»

«We shall work in this direction,» Tito «gave me his word».

However, all Tito's words and pledges were a bluff. He

misled and deceived us over the truth about the idea of the «Balkan Federation». As time and the facts proved, Tito was a savage anti-Marxist, a nationalist, chauvinist and agent of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. He was a «Trojan horse» in the socialist camp, in the international communist movement and, more especially, in the Balkans. By seizing on the idea of the «Balkan Federation» he aimed and struggled to annex the whole of the Balkans, including Albania, to Yugoslavia.

From 1947, when the relations between Albania and Yugoslavia developed, apart from the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid, we also signed the Economic Convention and a series of other economic agreements in connection with it, about which I shall speak in detail later, a number of comrades of our Political Bureau, especially Kristo Themelko, Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, on the urging of the Yugoslavs who were in or came to Albania, exerted continuous pressure on me to seek to enter into the «Balkan Federation» which, in their heads, meant that we should unite with Yugoslavia. I did not encourage this idea in them, but one day, about the beginning of 1948, they came to me and said: «The 'Balkan Federation' is being formed between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria!» I thought this problem had been talked over between Stalin, Dimitrov and Tito, irrespective of the fact that no opinion had been sought from us. In this situation we decided to write a letter to the CC of the CPY and Tito in which we asked them, among others, to make the matters clear to us because it was inconceivable that the «Balkan Federation» should be created with Bulgaria and Albania remain outside it.

We never received any reply or explanation. What was at the back of it became clear to us. Tito's Yugoslavia wanted to kill two birds with one stone: to annex Albania under the abortive so-called Balkan Federation and to extend its state power over this part of the Balkans, too.

Stalin who had devined Tito's expansionist plans, drew Dimitrov's attention to them and at the beginning of 1948 the latter declared publicly that he had been wrong in his

views about the Federation of Yugoslavia with Bulgaria.

Before I continue with the description of the visit, however, I want to say that Tito's words and the promises he made us about the question of Kosova were just as much a fraud as his words about the «Balkan Federation».

This Tito, who expressed his agreement with me over the problem of Kosova so «suavely», never allowed himself to say: «Comrade Enver, I propose that you ought to go to visit Kosova besides other parts of Yugoslavia. We ought to show the Albanian people of Kosova that the time of true friendship with the peoples of Yugoslavia has come,» and so on and so forth. Tito and company were afraid to do such a thing. Time was soon to reveal the deception and the great Serbo-Croat chauvinist savagery of Tito, not only against the Albanians who inhabited their own territories in Yugoslavia, but also against the People's Republic of Albania. Tito's secret plan was not that Kosova should be united with Albania, but that Albania should be united with Kosova and, together with it, be gobbled up by Titoite Yugoslavia. However, the Titoites were unable to achieve this diabolical aim. The year 1948 was a fatal year for them.

The falsity of Tito and company went so far that in regard to Kosova and all the Albanians who lived in Yugoslavia, they maintained a hostile stand even when these «acts of friendship» were taking place between our two republics, let alone after the year 1948, when they adopted a savage anti-Marxist, chauvinist stand of police persecution which was no different from that of the Serb kraljs. The relations of the PRA with Kosova in the period of *de jure* «friendship» were almost non-existent; they did not allow us to send people to Kosova allegedly because there were Ballists there, etc., etc. The terror imposed on the Albanians steadily mounted. Masses of people were imprisoned, killed, tortured and thrown into the terrible concentration camps of Ranković, always under the pretext of the fight against remnants of the «Ballist bands». This was a real genocide carried out with all means and in every way. In order to depopulate

Kosova, the Titoites, like the former reactionary regimes, forced hundreds of thousands of Albanians to emigrate to Turkey and elsewhere. In Kosova, not to mention Macedonia, the poverty was extreme, there were no Albanian schools and for this Tito and Ranković found many pretexts. Although the land of Kosova was fertile and had great underground riches such as are rarely found in any other zone of the Balkans, nothing was invested there and its agriculture was the most backward in Europe. This was the policy Tito pursued there. He told us one thing, but did another.

During the days of our visit in no meeting or reception, either in Belgrade or elsewhere, did I see or meet any of the Albanian communist leaders of Kosova, although some of them like Fadil Hoxha, Ymer Pula, the Nimanajs and others I knew personally. The only «representative» of Kosova whom I met was the mother of Miladin Popović...

We were at a rally when a grey-haired lady approached me, embraced and kissed me and whispered: «I am the mother of Miladin and Mihajlo¹ who fought together with you, my son, Enver Hoxha.» Pressing her close to my bosom, I felt as if together with her I was embracing my beloved comrade Miladin Popović, as if he were there close to me. I could no longer restrain myself and in my speech there I spoke of Miladin in the warmest words of admiration, as he deserved.

But let us continue further with the visit of our delegation to Yugoslavia.

Tito gave a big reception for us in the White Palace of Dedinja. It was «majestic». We were dressed in «official» clothes, but when we entered the palace what did we see? It was packed with women, men, officers, diplomats. They were all dressed in brilliant uniforms, dress suits, the bejewelled ladies in long silk gowns, deep décolletés, some with furs around their shoulders, the officers with all their de-

¹ Mihajlo Popović was released from an internment camp in Albania by Albanian partisans. He was killed in a clash with the enemy in Montenegro.

corations. Tito, standing at the head of the room where he received us, was dressed in full uniform, with his chest stuck out and covered with decorations; on one finger he wore a ring with a great sparkling diamond. We were completely out of our depth! We made our way among the people who looked at us over curiously from head to foot and applauded to the extent required by protocol. Only when we reached Tito and shook hands with him did we say to ourselves that we had escaped that ordeal and in fact we had. We were no longer subjected to the stares of the «nobility» of Belgrade. The central point again became Tito from whom we had stolen the limelight for no more than five minutes. The public of the White Palace no longer took any notice of us and we were relieved.

Tito wandered here and there, talking with one group after another, took me along and introduced me to some of them, but their names went in one ear and out the other. For me it was indescribable torture until we sat down at the table. Tito stood up, produced a sheet of paper which he read in his haughty tone, eulogized us to some extent, was applauded and sat down. After him I stood up, brought out my *speech**, read it, received some laconic applause and sat down. This ordeal, too, was over but our tortures at this «majestic» dinner had not ended. To take coffee, Tito stood up and all of us followed suit. He took some of us, the Soviet ambassador Lavrentyev and some of his comrades out into the park. It was dark, but the lights were on and Tito led us. Where were we going? We came to a grotto and went inside. There everything was shining in the brilliant lights — the carpets, the easy chairs, the tables loaded with drinks, with fruit, with cakes and soft drinks. We sat down without protocol at one table with Tito, Lavrentyev, Moša Pijade, Kardelj and some others. Naturally, Tito conducted the conversation. We listened more than we spoke; Lavrentyev and Pijade spoke several times. I recall that at one moment when Tito was talking «top-level policy» with Lavrentyev,

* English in the original.

Pijade, who knew that I had been to school in France, began to speak about the literature and history of France. The talk came round to Cardinal Richelieu. Pijade defended the thesis that he was a savage and cunning statesman. I agreed with him, but I added that the cardinal was also a great statesman and we should judge his work dialectically, taking account of the period. The work of Richelieu in the creation of the unity of the monarchy and the blows which he struck at the great feudal lords is considered in the history of France as revolutionary. Moša Pijade agreed; we also talked about the literary currents in France. Meanwhile Tito did not want to stay in the grotto although he took us there.

«Shall we get up and return to the hall?» he said, «because the rain has stopped.» While we were in the grotto a light rain had fallen, just enough to make the path muddy and to my distress, since the legs of my trousers were long, the cuffs of my trousers and the heels of my shoes became smeared with mud. When I glanced at them at the entrance to the chambers which were packed with people because the Marshal was coming, I blushed with shame. There was nothing I could do about it except that I should not move much, but this depended on Tito. I had to drag my feet so that the heels of my shoes would not be seen. And that is what I did. But I went through real torture. It was a blessing that the eyes of all were on the Marshal.

The room was so hot that we were sweating, people encircled the Marshal and us, but the heat dried the mud on my trousers and shiny shoes and made it more obvious. Finally, Tito said:

«Come along, my friends, I'll show you round the palace where I live and work.»

We thought we were saved! But there in front of us, with a crowd of women with low-cut dresses and jewels sparkling on their necks and fingers and men in formal evening dress following us, appeared a stair «*en colimaçon*»*.

* spiral staircase (French in the original).

We had to go up it and this time the trick of dragging my feet would not work. What was I to do? Against my desire and allegedly out of politeness I climbed seven or eight steps without turning my back so that people did not look at my feet, but went up backwards facing them and waving to them. I got through this final torture, too.

After climbing the stairs, we reached a balcony surrounded by a wooden balustrade; the guests were in the chambers below while we walked around the gallery off which opened a series of doors. The walls were hung with various paintings. Who among us knew anything about them? No one. Tito, as the host, proudly told us one by one the names of the artists, their artistic values... and their monetary worth. We feigned astonishment, but we were thinking about the problems of our people. Tito opened a door, went through it and we followed him.

«This is the room where I work,» he said. It was a beautiful room with big windows, with paintings on the walls, and in a corner a desk furnished with everything necessary to write, everything on it valuable, but no book, no notebook. On one side of the table was a plated metal stand on top of which sat a model aeroplane, likewise beautifully plated; Tito pressed a button and the aeroplane began to spin round and round. It was a toy!

«A gift to me from the workers,» said Tito.

From the working office we passed into another room with beautiful armchairs, a big radio-gramophone and very modern furniture.

«This is the ante-room to my bedroom. I have my breakfast here,» said Tito. «Gottwald¹ gave me this radio-gramophone.»

From here he invited us to look at his bedroom with a big luxurious bed, lace-edged sheets, silk pyjamas lying on the bed and then he opened his wardrobe to show us his many

1 K. Gottwald (1896-1953), chairman of the CC of the CP and President of the Democratic People's Republic of Czechoslovakia.

suits, shirts, etc. He did not fail to show us the «sparkling» bathroom, too.

When all this was over, Tito told us that he was going to show us the room of the party which, as he put it, «not everyone enters, I keep the key in my pocket.» We said to ourselves: «He is doing us a great honour. Let us see what this 'sacred room' is like.» It was a room like all rooms. On the wall there was a chart.

«This,» said Tito, «is secret. It is the scheme of the organization of the party. The Congress, the Central Committee, the regional committees, their apparatuses and the basic organizations.»

On one wall there was a small shelf with books by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and in another corner a safe. This was the «secret room» and with the visit to this secret room, we ended the grand soirée, wishing the Marshal good night.

The day after this dinner Josip Djerdja arrived in our residence, dressed as always in his dark suit, laughing and speaking that Albanian of his with his unpractised accent. It was a habit of his after each phrase to grip his nose between two fingers and bend it left and right as if to emphasize his words. He had come together with the chief of protocol to present to us the program of visits and sight-seeing in Belgrade and in the other republics. Amongst other things, they proposed that we should visit Croatia and Slovenia and we agreed readily. In Belgrade we made no visits on foot; naturally, we laid a wreath at Avala on the grave of the unknown soldier of the Serbian army of the kraljs, adopted as an altar by the regime of Tito, too. There a Yugoslav general, a hero of the peoples of Yugoslavia, explained to us the development of the fighting for the liberation of Belgrade by the Soviet army and the Yugoslav National Liberation Army.

Later we visited a number of factories and a plant where trucks were assembled from imported parts. Naturally we rejoiced over what we saw. They were fine things, and the

Yugoslavs were much ahead of us. They had inherited something from the past and received very large reparations for the damage caused by the war, whereas we inherited nothing but poverty and want, and from reparations received a few very old lathes with which not even one engineering plant could be set up. From reparations we also received a worn-out ship which we named «Borova» in honour of the martyred Borova village of Kolonja which the German nazis totally destroyed, killing all the men, women and children they found in it as a reprisal against the partisans. The Yugoslavs did not fail to take the ship «Borova» from us under the pretext that we had no way to use it and when we fell out with them they seized it and did not return it to us, seized it as «spoils of war», like all the other assets they took from us, because they took more from us than they gave.

During one of the days we stayed in Belgrade, which we visited going everywhere by car, they put on a reception for us at the House of Officers to which, if I am not mistaken, Tito came, too. The Soviet military attaché as well as other Soviet officers attended, too. The House of Officers was a multi-storeyed building put up specially for the officers. They welcomed us well, joyfully, with sympathy, like anti-fascist fighters of the great common war which we had waged. The Yugoslav officers had very good clothing and boots, beyond any comparison with what our officers had, but they did not outdo us in courage, daring and determination.

One evening after these visits Josip Djerdja came all smiles and, squeezing his nose between his two fingers, told us:

«Tomorrow you are to go to the Presidium of the Skupština, because Ribar sr. (the president of the Presidium, and father of Lola Ribar, killed during the war) is going to decorate you. You, Comrade Enver,» said Djerdja, «are to be decorated with the highest order that Yugoslavia has.»

At the ceremony on the following day at the Presidium of the Skupština, which was like a bourgeois parliament, because, in fact, it had been built by the Serb-Croat kraljs,

Dr. Ribar decorated all of us. He hung around my neck the Order of Hero of the Peoples of Yugoslavia, which was a gold medallion hung on a red ribbon with two black lines in the middle. Kardelj, Pijade, Djilas, Popović and others were present at the decoration ceremony. I expressed thanks on behalf of the comrades and, among other things, I pointed out that this decoration belonged to the Albanian people and to their sons and daughters who gave their lives for the liberation of Yugoslavia, too. A few months after Liberation, the Presidium of Yugoslavia had decorated a number of our comrades with the Partisan Star. Thus, I had two Yugoslav decorations. After the breach with them and after all the evil things which the Titoites did against our country and our Party, we returned these decorations to them in protest.

We set out for Croatia and Slovenia. We were happy that we were to see new places and friendly people. Everywhere people like Bakarić and his comrades in Croatia and Miha Marinko and his comrades in Slovenia welcomed us warmly. We visited Zagreb and Ljubljana and other cities of these two Republics, visited factories, combines and museums. The people were well dressed, the country was more urbanized, and there were few wartime ruins to be seen. Slovenia was even more advanced, Ljubljana was almost undamaged by the war, the Austrian style of the Austro-Hungarian empire predominated, the standard of living was higher than that of the other places we visited those days, and the bourgeoisie more unharmed. We visited a metallurgical plant there and this impressed us. A thing that struck the eye was the fact that the church exercised great influence in these places and there were icons and crosses to be seen in the city streets and outside the towns.

They also took us to Bled, to a luxurious hotel beside the beautiful lake with the same name. They told us that foreign tourists came there and this was a source of hard currency.

Later, not on an official visit, I had a meeting with Tito on the shores of this lake, I think it was when I was on my way to the Peace Conference in Paris. I went via Belgrade, but

Tito was in Slovenia in a villa on the shores of Lake Bled. They took me by aircraft to meet him there. We talked on the verandah about the possible development of the problems which were to be discussed in Paris. Naturally we were in agreement. Tito kept me for lunch. It was a beautiful luxurious summer villa set amongst trees and flowers. At the edge of the lake below the villa white motor-boats were anchored. Lying at Tito's feet in the room was his big dog (the successor to the unfortunate «Lux»), which seemed to be asleep, snoring sometimes, and sometimes releasing a loud fart. In the end Tito could put up with it no longer and told General Todorović, a former partisan who had also been in Albania: «Put him out!»

After we finished our talk, before we had lunch Tito proposed to me and Žujović, whom he liquidated later together with Hebrang as Stalinists, that we take a trip on the lake. I did not refuse, although I did not know how to swim if the boat should capsize.

The motor started and the boat began to move. Tito's dog followed us swimming. «At least,» I thought to myself, «this will cool his backside.» From the edge of the lake men, women and children shouted:

*«Heroj Tito, družo Tito, naš Tito!»**

This impressed itself on me because we had heard this slogan from the Italian fascists when they shouted, «*Duce a noi!*»** I was astonished how they could permit it. On the way back Tito said:

«The dog's tired.» And he called to him, «Climb in!»

The dog scrambled into the boat and since it was the size of a calf, the boat rocked a bit, but we came to no harm, except that when the dog shook himself the suit which I had for the Peace Conference was soaked.

«We will dry it when we get back to the villa,» said Tito.

* «Hero Tito, Comrade Tito, our Tito!»

** The Duce is ours! (It. in the original).

«It doesn't matter,» I said to him, giving the dog a hard look.

However, all this was a later occurrence, from which, apart from what I have just mentioned, I remember almost nothing, because in fact we did not discuss any weighty problem. As I said, Tito was on holiday and could not exchange his pleasures for anything else. Let us return again to the first visit, the official one.

When we returned to Belgrade from the visits to Croatia and Slovenia we were very tired, however we were young at that time and one day's rest was sufficient for us to recover from all the physical weariness. Now we had to complete the talks which we had begun. First, we reached agreement over the main content of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid and decided that the signing of the treaty would be done a little later in Tirana.¹

After this we went on to the economic problems. Nako and the comrades of the Ministry of Trade had held a series of meetings with Boris Kidrić and others and had achieved some results which Nako considered «satisfactory». The Yugoslavs had agreed to supply us with several objects on credit (I shall speak more extensively about this «aid» later), the question was especially about a sugar «factory» and a rope «factory», would assist us with rails and a locomotive for the Durrës-Tirana railway, would supply us with some pipes for oil and some other minor items. At that time these things seemed to us quite a lot. Nevertheless I found the opportunity to ask Nako in an aside:

«Is this all the credit covers?»

«In general, yes,» said Nako. «We shall go into this more concretely later. They are promising to give us large amounts of aid.»

Another important question was that of a number of joint companies which we agreed would be set up, mainly for the development of our mines. Tito boosted these com-

1 This treaty was signed in Tirana on July 9, 1946.

panies to us, when we finally met to sign the documents, saying:

«We have similar companies with the Soviet Union which are going very well, give results and are helping us in the construction of socialism!»

We agreed to the formation of these companies in regard to which we subsequently drafted the constitutions, defined the procedure, payments, shares and the nature of participation. As to the truth in regard to these companies, too, I am not going to enlarge at the moment, but will content myself by pointing out that the aim of the Yugoslavs to plunder us meant that on paper these companies would exist as joint companies, but would be run by them. While all the material would be ours, they would not contribute or bring in anything, but would dominate them and take their production. Of course, the deception did not go on for long. The deception about the «joint companies», which Tito advertised to us so vigorously, was unmasked like all the others.

When all the official documents were ready we signed them at a solemn meeting. Champagne was drunk. In the evening we were to put on the farewell dinner and of course Tito was invited. The dinner was to be given in our embassy.

Josip Djerdja arrived, not smiling this time. He begged us to excuse Tito who could not come allegedly for security reasons, because the embassy was in this and in that street, was amongst other houses, and we would understand the problem, etc., etc.! We were sorry, but there was nothing we could do. The others came.

The day for our departure for our Homeland arrived. At the airport they farewelled us with all the ceremony with which they had welcomed us. We climbed into the aircraft and returned to Tirana.

The joy with which I set out had evaporated. I returned with an inexplicable feeling, a mixture of trust and disillusionment over the haughtiness and scandalous luxury of Tito which was clearly obvious even at that time. I asked myself: How are we going to get on and work with Tito?

V

TITOITE AID — CHAINS FOR THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENSLAVEMENT OF ALBANIA

Grave situation of our economy after Liberation ■ The friends leave us to fend for ourselves in our poverty ■ Market sharks, generous in «advice» and «orientations» ■ The bitter history of the Albanian-Yugoslav Economic Convention. On the problem of the parity of the currencies, the removal of tariff barriers, the joint companies, the unification of prices. Our objections to the true nature of the treaties signed ■ The ill-famed Savo Zlatić in Albania ■ Tito's accusation of «two lines in the leadership of the CPA» ■ On the visit of our top-level delegation to Moscow. Belgrade accuses us of «anti-Yugoslavism» ■ Tito and his men want to discredit our leadership with Stalin ■ The Yugoslavs keep us under surveillance and sabotage us ■ Further aggravation of our relations with them.

The picture of the relations between our two parties and countries in the initial period after Liberation would not in any way be complete if we did not touch on our relations in the economic field, too. This is a very extensive field which has always attracted our attention and the attention of Tito's men as well. However, in dealing with the economic relations of the same period, the stands and assessments of them by the two sides are diametrically opposed.

While Tito, during his lifetime, and the whole of Yugoslav propaganda arsenal, before and after Tito's death, have praised to the skies the Yugoslav-Albanian economic relations in the years 1945-1947 as an example of «fraternal relations», of the «sacrifice» and the «generous spirit» of the Titoites towards us, we, for our part, have always said the opposite.

Our conclusion, drawn not today, or even in 1948 (when Tito and Titoism were publicly denounced), but earlier, when in public declarations we were still describing each other as «friends», has been and is this: the field of economic relations between our two parties and countries has been one of the fields in which the features of Titoite revisionism, as a whole, and all their anti-Albanian, nationalist and chauvinist intentions, in particular, have been displayed in a most obvious and unscrupulous way. In the «theorizing» and the first practical steps of Tito and company on the problem of the construction of socialism in Yugoslavia we distinguished more clearly their profound deviations from the theory and practice of scientific socialism. In their so-called economic aid for our country we very quickly saw and understood the attempts and diabolical aims of the Titoites to turn our economy into an appendage of the Yugoslav economy and one of the main ways they followed to place Albania under the chains of a new enslavement. Thus, the «economic aid» of the Titoites to us, if it can be called aid, had only one purpose: to help Tito to enslave Albania economically and politically more quickly.

While stating this conclusion from the outset, I in no way wish to deny what was «good», or to violate the truth in this field, either. What, then, is the truth?

Friends or plunderers?!

We were in the first years of Liberation. The country was devastated, ruined from every stand-point, there was great poverty, but the morale of the people was extraordinari-

ly high. We had smashed the reactionary feudal bourgeoisie, together with the occupier, and the people, led by their heroic Communist Party, had taken the new state power of people's democracy into their own hands.

Now, with Liberation, this people's state power had to be clung to tightly, had to be further strengthened in class battles, and the new Albania had to be built up from nothing, from poverty and ignorance. Irrespective of our material poverty, the people, led by the Party, were to accomplish this task with great and indescribable enthusiasm, with their own forces, without the aid of anyone in the first years. These were the most heroic years in the history of our people. It was the period when the people sweated, toiling with half-empty bellies, with rags on their backs and without roofs over their heads, the period when we fought against shortages of every kind, against the difficulties of nature and against the sabotage of internal and external enemies, but always with the unshakeable belief the Party had implanted in us that we would triumph over whatever difficulty and whichever enemy.

In the first two years after Liberation, in particular, we were given no aid on credit from the Soviet Union or from Yugoslavia, either. Those few urgently needed goods which were sent to us were very insignificant things, almost nothing at all, and all of them paid for, either in cash or by selling the Yugoslavs oil, kerosene, bitumen or other goods which they frequently seized almost without payment, as an «obligation», as «tokens of friendship» and «fraternity».

Hence, we can say that in the first year after Liberation we had trade relations only with Yugoslavia. However, the trade was virtually one-way and in our disfavour. We gave more than we received. We gave good products and received rubbish. We expropriated the big merchants of their property and sold the fabrics to the Yugoslavs at prices which they set, while the razor blades and minor things of this type which they sold us cost us the earth. We imported bread grain

from them, because we were short of it, some leather and iron plough-shares, and these they sold us at their internal prices which were very high. We sold them olives, cheese, olive-oil, etc., at a time when we did not have enough of them for ourselves. We shared everything with equal willingness.

At that time this whole situation seemed to us more or less normal, because we thought that Yugoslavia, too, was a country devastated by the war, as ours was, had economic difficulties and it was hard for them to help us. But we hoped that the situation would improve.

Apart from what I have mentioned above, both throughout the year 1945 and most of 1946, the good fraternal relations with Yugoslavia (and with the Soviet Union, too) consisted also of «exchange of experience», the provision of some bursaries for our boys to study in Moscow and Belgrade and the sending of a few specialists to help us. Later, especially after my visit to Belgrade in June 1946, our economic relations began to develop more «intensively», but this development consisted of talks, projects and declarations on paper, of endless promises, but for the time being nothing concrete. Nevertheless, the future seemed promising. Throughout this whole period, one of the most grave and most difficult, we managed to live, as you might say, «on our own fat» and it can be imagined what reserves we had been able to inherit from the past! Almost nothing. We had little or nothing, we were starving or half starving, but we did not let the people to die either of hunger or from cold, we began to fulfil the most elementary needs.

However, the task and aim of our Party was by no means merely the regulation of the life and fulfilment of the immediate needs of the population. The task of our Communist Party and the people's state power was to fulfil the supreme aspirations of the people for which so much blood had been shed. Major socio-economic reforms had to be carried out and the character of the economy had to be brought into conformity with the character of the new state power. That is, we had to lead the country consistently forward on the road

of the construction of socialism in all fields and, in the concrete instance, in the sector of the economy, too.

We knew that the fundamental factor for the socialist transformation of the country was the internal factor; we knew that the external auxiliary factor would be the Soviet Union of Stalin, in the first place, but especially in the conditions when we still had not established the necessary direct links with the Soviet state, we turned with open hearts to our neighbouring friends, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. They did not hesitate to «assist» us, especially with «experience», with «orientations» which they gave us either through our people who went to Belgrade, or through pamphlets and reports, or through Stojnić, Djerdja, and later, through the ill-famed Savo Zlatić, as well as through a whole series of «experts» and «political economists», as Sejfulla called them.

But where did all these officials «direct» us?!

I spoke above about the question of the «stages» of the revolution and about the «concern» of Tito, Kardelj and Djilas that we should «not be hasty and skip the stages». Now these problems are very clear, and the Party has done a colossal job to ensure that even the school pupils thoroughly understand them, but in the years 1945-1946, even we who led the Party and the state were to some degree pupils ourselves. We were not lacking in devotion and zeal, but how difficult and what a great loss it was when we were often obliged to expend our zeal merely to discover what bad lessons were served up to us by our «friends»!

We spent a great deal of efforts and time, quarrelled with Sejfulla and with those behind Sejfulla who served up the idea of «two parallel economies»¹, who told us that

¹ Sejfulla Malëshova, influenced by the anti-Marxist theorizations of the enemies of socialism in the Soviet Union, where he had been for some time, advocated the view on the parallel existence of the two sectors — socialist and capitalist, in the Albanian economy. This view was not different in any way from the theory of «equilibrium», the reactionary essence of which had been rejected by J. V. Stalin long ago.

«this is not the time for transformations of a socialist character», that «we should go to socialism together with the bourgeoisie», etc., etc., and through these battles we did what Marxism-Leninism taught us. The fact is that, among the countries in which the regime of people's democracy was established after the Second World War, Albania set out more rapidly, more resolutely and consistently on the road of the socialist transformation of the country. Naturally, in this rapid progress we did not discard anything from the Leninist concept about the stages of the revolution. We discarded only the Yugoslav theorizing and the sinister aims which were hidden behind this theorizing.

Our «friends» greatly hindered and misdirected us also on the question of the Land Reform. Immediately after Liberation we began to carry out our promise to give the land to the tiller, but the Stojnićes, Djerdjas and others hastened to «advise» us that we should not «fall out» with the former landowners; they told us to take a bit of their land (someone even «advised» to pay for it with money!), and to leave them a good part of their land which, in fact, represented areas ten or twenty times larger than those of the «poor»!

Under the pressure of Sejfulla Malëshova, at first, such a wrong «orientation» was approved, but we were soon aware of what dangerous consequences this step would have and made the necessary corrections. We set a fair limit for the area of land which would be allowed to each family (not more than 5 hectares per family) and took a series of other measures which would hinder the revival of the capitalist sector in the countryside (the buying, selling and renting of land were prohibited by law, etc.).

As for their «orientations» in the sector of industry the Yugoslavs had no need to rack their brains to find «variants».

Initially, they «advised» us not to begin this work at all, because we were poor, we were short of food and footwear, and we could not afford industry! «Later,» they said, «we shall see what can be done with the mines and the oil, but for the time being record what you have, supply us with

raw materials, and we shall supply you with ample finished products.»

«Agriculture — that is what you should go in for, as the backward agrarian country you are!» they advised us.

Six or seven years later we were to hear the same «advise» from the mouths of those who usurped the leadership of the party and state in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. I have spoken in more detail about this elsewhere.¹ Here I want only to recall that when we were confronted with Khrushchev, Mikoyan and company, we had been tempered in the great school of Marxism-Leninism, in the school of the direct clash with Titoite revisionism, and as a result of this, we quickly distinguished the Khrushchevite variant of modern revisionism. In the first «school», however, in the first clash, the difficulties and obstacles were greater, because there were many things we did not know, we had no experience, and we also suffered from that type of «euphoric estimation» of others that I mentioned above. It seemed to us that all of them were sincere, as we were towards Marxism-Leninism, both in theory and practice, and towards our Party and country. All these and other reasons, understandable at the time of this first clash with the revisionists, sometimes led us to take a wrong step or some decision which should not have been taken. But it is a great good fortune, or more correctly, a great merit of our Party that even in those extremely grave external and internal conditions, if we did «slip» into some wrong step, this was only on individual issues of the way of implementing the line, but we never permitted appreciable errors in the political, ideological and economic line.

I said above that from the very beginning the Yugoslav «friends» were opposed to the socialist industrialization of our country. The fact is also that in the first post-Liberation years we did not do anything notable in this field. But this

1 See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, pp. 61-100, Eng. ed.

did not by any means come about because we accepted the Yugoslav orientation! No, we did not accept this orientation in any instance, but if we did not proceed rapidly on the course of industrialization, this was because we could go no faster, because we had no base from the past on which to rely, and at those moments, had no aid at all from the Yugoslav «friends» or the Soviets. As soon as any small possibility was created we exploited it immediately. This is what occurred, for example, with some old equipment for the engineering industry which managed to reach Albania as part of the minimal reparations which we were awarded. Since we ourselves «did not know» how to get the reparations which belonged to us, the Yugoslav «friends» became the «handlers» and «intermediaries». After taking for themselves whatever looked best from what belonged to us, the Yugoslavs sent what was left over to Tirana. With the tools that came we equipped one or two workshops, put them to use and inaugurated the first engineering plant in Albania, precisely that plant which, since 1946, has borne my name, but which, over the years, has grown, been transformed and turned into one of the most powerful and modern combines of our engineering industry.

From these early moments we adopted the same correct Marxist-Leninist stand on every other aspect of the line of the Party and the socialist construction of the country. As I said, however, in individual aspects of the application of the line, mistakes, hasty or imposed decisions could not be avoided.

This is what happened, for example, with the orientation which we gave the peasantry in the years 1946 and 1947 about giving «priority» to certain agricultural crops.

The Yugoslavs talked on and on for hours and days on end to us about making agriculture as «productive» as possible, «a great source» of income and funds to buy equipment.

«In your conditions, when you lack monetary or any other means to buy consumer goods or equipment abroad,» they told us, «the best way is to turn agriculture into a great source of funds and values. With this land and these marvellous cli-

matic conditions you have, you can achieve whatever you want!»

And how concretely?

«Forget about growing maize and wheat!» Josip Djerdja advised us. «Grain will never bring much sunshine into your life. It won't ensure even half the bread you need for your people, let alone provide you with any supplementary income. Plant sunflower! Do you know what sunflower is?!»

The truth is we knew something about this crop, but we did not know what Djerdja knew.

«It's a blessed plant!» he «explained» to us. «Oil, vegetable oil, is produced from it. Not only will you satisfy all your people's needs for oil, but we in Yugoslavia have great need, too. You could also sell it on the Western markets. Sunflower will open the whole world to you, will open up hard currency markets.»

«Our problem is bread,» we opposed them. «Our people are used to eating their meat and beans even without oil, but not without bread. And besides, most of the peasantry live solely on bread, a little cottage cheese and onions.»

«We will bring grain from Vojvodina!» said Djerdja. «You have no idea what Vojvodina is. It's a granary for Yugoslavia and for you. The wheat grows as tall as a man. We will be pleased to supply you, and with profit for you, in exchange for sunflower. Sunflower...»

The same hymns to sunflower were sung in Belgrade, and not only the Yugoslav agricultural specialists, but also those who came on party matters, and even the militarymen, repeated the same hymns to us.

They did not hesitate to take a pencil and work out «so much for this and so much for that» until we had no alternative but to accept that we had a great blessing before our eyes which we had not discovered!

So we gave the peasants the orientation to plant the fields with sunflower and not to worry about bread grain, because Tito would bring us plenty from Vojvodina (just as Khrushchev was going to bring it from the Ukraine 10-12 years later!).

To express the highest level of suffering and hardships, our people have a saying: «To suffer the grief of the olive», but «the grief of the olive» was nothing at all compared with the «grief» we suffered from sunflower. Since we told them to do so, the peasants planted big areas to this crop, but the total lack of experience, the lack of conviction about the value of «the flower», the deplorable conditions of the land at that time, the lack of seeds, mechanization, irrigation, etc., left us not only without «hard currency and equipment», but also without bread! And when we mentioned the granaries of Vojvodina the Yugoslavs turned from «generous» friends into traders:

«We shall supply you with grain, but you must either deliver the sunflower seed, as we agreed, or pay for it in cash! It can't be supplied free!»

They were right! We had not carried out our «contractual obligations»!

Rather than to dwell any longer on this «history» over which we can smile now, but which in 1946 and 1947 caused us many sleepless nights, I want to say only one thing: the «orientation» of the Yugoslavs to give priority to sunflower over bread grain was not a chance «mistake» of theirs, was not the result of some foolish and superficial judgement of our conditions and possibilities of that time! No! Everything had been carefully considered, and the «orientation» which seemed «agricultural», above all, concealed deliberate political aims:

In the context of the Titoites' all-round efforts to annex Albania, the imposition on us of a mistaken and wrong policy in agriculture would create the most suitable conditions for the leadership in Belgrade to realize its ambitions: our country would be threatened by famine, our Party would be discredited in the eyes of the masses as «incapable» of improving the life of the poor, and in the end we would be compelled to hold out our hand to our «friends» and they were just waiting for the moment to seize it and our whole body.

In short, they wanted to turn the whole of Albania into a «sunflower» which would turn its head and its body towards their «sun» — Titoism and Titoite Yugoslavia.

They exerted similar pressure on us also over another «source of hard currency income»: cotton!

«Cotton is gold!» Djerdja and, later, Tito's other emissary Zlatić told us. «Make the fields of Myzeqe, Vlora and Saranda shine with white cotton, because later your face will shine with joy!»

So we told the peasants to plant this, too, but as is known, neither the fields we planted to it nor anything else turned out a «shining success», but on the contrary, it simply increased our difficulties and hardships.

I by no means wish to say that even at those moments we underrated these industrial crops, or that our peasant was «conservative» and refused to embrace the new! Not at all. When the moment came, we planted sunflower and cotton and still do, and they are yielding ever better results. But in 1945 and 1946, when we lacked everything, when half the lowland zone was swamps and marshes, when bread had been turned into a sharp weapon which would determine our existence or non-existence, to give up growing grain in those conditions meant to set out on the road of failures and catastrophe. Soon, however, we were to be convinced that everything was wrong and anti-Marxist. The day was to come when the wheat «as tall as a man» of Vojvodina would hang over our heads like the sword of Damocles. However, we managed to escape the blow. The bitter experience of 1946-1947 became a great lesson. In practice, in conflicts, sometimes very dangerous ones, we were thoroughly learning the theory and practice of scientific socialism. Later, when that other Tito, Nikita Khrushchev, was to show us the way to come out in the sunshine through sheep, oranges and the orders of the fish, we were to laugh to ourselves with a mixture of irony and regret. «History» was repeating itself, but not our initial mistake. The «sunflowers» had taught us not to turn our heads either to Vojvodina or to the Ukraine,

but only to Marxism-Leninism! We had drawn lessons about what modern revisionism is in appearance and in content.

Meanwhile, with persistent all-round efforts we continued to seek other ways, means and possibilities to advance. Especially after the establishment of diplomatic relations at the end of 1945, we turned for aid to the Soviet Union, too.

In the talks which I had had with the officials of the Soviet embassy in Tirana on this problem, although they welcomed our proposals and requests, they always said: «We shall report this to Moscow.» It was natural that they should report to Moscow, but Moscow did not give any clear reply and indirectly implied, until they told us this openly, «We shall give you economic aid through Yugoslavia, because we give it considerable aid, including some for you. Therefore, address your request to the Yugoslavs.» Molotov repeated the same thing to us in Paris when we were there for the Peace Conference, and moreover, he said this in the presence of Kardelj and Moša Pijade!

Although we did not understand this method of economic aid at all, we thought and believed that even such forms could exist between socialist countries. We could do nothing else but wait for the «intermediaries» to give us what they should. But if as the «intermediaries» for war reparations they gave us some scrap iron, as the «intermediaries» for the Soviet aid they gave us nothing at all.

Such was the much advertised «aid» for our country from the leadership of Belgrade up till to the middle of 1946: nothing concrete, mainly «advice» and «orientations», and the sort of «orientations» I mentioned above.

After my visit to Belgrade in June 1946 it seemed as if a new, more advanced phase in our mutual economic relations was beginning. We put before Tito and company the request that they helped us with the methodology of drafting a unified plan, for the time being to cover one or two years, and gave us, according to their possibilities, some aid on credit, sent us some specialists for different sectors of the economy, etc. This time our insistence on taking the first steps on the

road of socialist industrialization of the country made the Yugoslav leaders display more prudence in their «orientations». They told us that they would help us in this field, too, but «advised» us that, apart from the development of some mines and the extraction of oil, we should concentrate our main attention on light industry and food-processing.

«We shall help you with some credits, too,» they told us, «but we must reach agreement on the ways in which this aid will come. From our experience hitherto,» they continued, «we see that a very effective way for collaboration and aid is that of joint companies. We have created such companies with the Soviets and they are going very well. Let us create such companies with you, too!»

The prolonged advertisement of the «advantages» of these companies and the repeated mention of the fact that such companies had been created with the Soviet Union, too, led us to agree in principle, at the time when I was in Yugoslavia, to the creation of these companies in the future.

«Up till the end of the year,» they told us, «we have time to discuss them in detail, about how they will be set up, how they will function and how they will be run. But this is not a problem to be discussed in the leadership. Let the specialists of the respective sectors deal with this.»

So we returned to Tirana with a series of promises and with «proposals for a wider range of relations», although everything was left evasive, up in the air. After some months' silence they informed us that the time had come for the experts of the two countries to meet jointly in Belgrade and decide everything precisely. It seemed that 1947 was going to start well. About the end of October 1946 we dispatched Nako with a group of comrades from the Ministry of the Economy and the State Planning Commission and could only wait for the results of the talks. From this point begins the bitter history of the signing of the Albanian-Yugoslav Economic Convention at the end of November 1946.

The Economic Convention between Albania and Yugo-

slavia was the concretization of the alliance between our two countries. This Convention brought with it the protocols on the co-ordination of plans, on the unification of prices, on the establishment of parity of currencies, on the joint companies, on the removal of tariff barriers between the two countries, etc.

We signed these agreements but, as I shall describe later, during these negotiations over them we had doubts, questions, and serious objections. On the eve of the signing we repeated our objections and worries to the Yugoslav side once again, and they, naturally, did not like this. But they slapped us on the back:

«Don't worry, everything will be in your favour!»

It was not long before we understood clearly that the Economic Convention, with all its components, was nothing but a new savage weapon of Titoite diversion and sabotage to subjugate and gobble up Albania. As the first step, by means of this Convention the Yugoslav government aimed to further exploit and plunder our country through the well-known neo-colonialist forms; as the second step, it aimed to turn our entire economy into an appendage of the Yugoslav economy, to make our economy completely dependent on its leadership, and as the third step, to create the conditions in which we, like it or not, would accept economic and political «union» with Yugoslavia as the only way out!

To go into all the details of what occurred in reality with the Economic Convention would require whole volumes, which would portray both the theoretical arguments and the deceptions committed about them by the Yugoslav side, as well as a confrontation with figures and facts between what they promised us and what they gave us, between what was sold to us and what they took from us with the crudest methods. A correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of these problems has been made in many documents and materials of the Party, commencing from the report which I delivered at the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in September 1948, and the reports delivered at the 1st Congress of the CPA in

November of that year, etc.¹ Further, more detailed analyses have been made since, and they bring out clearly the neo-colonialist and anti-Albanian aims and stands of the Yugoslav leadership in the whole process of economic relations with our country, and in this context, also the nature of the Economic Convention signed in November 1946. Irrespective of this analysis, however, the bitter and danger-fraught history of that period still remains an open field full of interest for our scholars, especially those engaged in the history of our economic relations with the external world. The figures and facts are such that they prove in the most incontestable way that the aims and efforts of those who called themselves the «communist leaders» of Yugoslavia had no essential difference in content from the neo-colonialist aims and efforts of Italian, British, American and other capital in the black years of the Zogite monarchy. There was an apparent difference in form, in the disguises under which the new colonialists presented themselves, but there was a major factor which was decisively different: the fact that our Party and people, through their efforts, toil and sacrifices, did not permit 1939 to be repeated in 1947 or 1948. In the field of the economy, as in every other field, the plans and aims of the renegades of Belgrade were smashed to smithereens.

While I do not consider it necessary in this book of notes and reminiscences to repeat the things which have already been said, or to enter into details of figures and facts from the economic aspect, I want to mention something of the circumstances in which we were obliged to sign the Convention and the treaties in connection with it.

As I said, the head of our delegation was Nako. He maintained contact with us by radiogram and from his first reports it seemed that everything was starting well. The top functionaries of the Yugoslav economy — Kidrić («the genius of the economy», as the Yugoslavs called him!), his deputies —

¹ See Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. I, Tirana 1974, pp. 744-763, Eng. ed.

the Mори́ces, Nekidри́ces and Petrovíces, together with whole squads of other specialists and functionaries of medium or lower rank, welcomed and farewelled him.

Naturally, after the smiles and embraces, after the meals and the drinks, they got down to the business in hand. On the 27-28-year-old Nako, all the bosses¹ of the Yugoslav economy poured out a flood of knowledge: joint companies are set up on the basis of the size of the contributions to the initial funds; the policy of investments in them will be this and that; the initial profit, the net profit...; the costs...; the raw material...; the country where the company functions has these rights and those obligations...; the participating country has these and those; the credit will be provided on these conditions, will be repaid in this manner, etc., etc.

After delivering a lecture lasting a good two or three hours to him, the «friends», people specially prepared for this work, left Nako «in peace» to work on his own «without interruption»; they left him 100-200 pages of theoretical and practical materials on the nature of the «joint companies» and instructed him very politely:

«We can talk tomorrow in the morning session about any question which you have. Don't forget, this evening Comrade Kidrić is expecting us for dinner.»

And when Nako still had not managed to gain a clear idea as to the nature of «joint companies», other specialists descended upon him to explain the projects for each separate company («the joint company for railway construction», «the joint company for the drilling and extraction of oil», «for hydro-power stations», «for imports-exports», etc.). Again invitations to official, friendly and private lunches and dinners, further whole dossiers of working material, further discussions, but about other problems: about the unification of prices, about the unification of currencies, about the principle of the customs union, etc., etc.

From time to time I received brief radiograms which

1 English in the original.

annoyed me because they told me nothing (I did not understand what was going on), but they also worried me. By urgent radiogram I sought details and explanations from Nako, but he either «disappeared» for whole days, or put me off with such reports: «They insist on my attending an anniversary of liberation in a province of Slovenia stop will continue the talks after three days stop will send a detailed letter later stop Nako.»

And precisely when Nako was immersed in the labyrinths of the Yugoslav economists, when he was left not a single hour to rest, or to explain things to us in a detailed letter, we received more disturbing news from him: «The comrades (he meant the Yugoslavs) tell us that no accords on deliveries or anything else can be concluded if we do not immediately present our plan of development for the year 1947!»

So this was what was occurring. Initially, we had reached agreement that the Yugoslavs would accord us what they could from the things we asked for and after this we would sit down to draft the plan, while now they were demanding the plan as a preliminary condition! In these conditions, Nako Spiru in Belgrade sat down and, amongst a thousand and one other jobs, worked out on his own the «orientation plan» for the development of Albania!

I do not want to say that either Nako or we, who allowed Nako to act in this way, were to blame for this. No, it was a whole policy which the Yugoslavs pursued to confuse us and to force us to accept instantly and hastily whatever they said and in the way that interested them.

This is how they acted in regard to everything else. Among the major problems which they put before us and for which they demanded immediate signature were those of the establishment of parity of the currencies, the unification of prices, etc. They overwhelmed Nako with their ideas, proposals and «arguments»; Nako, from the depths of the mire in which he was bogged down, appealed to me by radiogram: «Help! Send me instructions how to act!»

Here there is an important fact which must not be

forgotten. Many things in regard to the financial, technical, organizational, and other aspects we still did not know well and had no way how to know them. We were clear on the orientation that we must develop the country according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, but in regard to how the joint companies would be organized concretely, what advantages and disadvantages they or the customs union, the unification of the currencies, etc., had, we did not have the necessary experience, and on some of them we had no experience at all. We considered Nako, for instance, as one of the most expert of us and I, in no way, wish to underrate his will or his abilities. But Nako, even as a specialist of the economy, leaving aside a series of other shortcomings he had, should be seen as he was at that time. He had not managed to complete his higher studies in economics, not to mention the fact that he was completely lacking in experience. It was like giving a young boy with two or three years of higher schooling the responsibility for handling such specialized problems of a country, no matter how small. Indeed, now the matter is simpler because even if one person, indeed a main functionary, cannot or does not know how to run things, there is a big, harmonious mechanism that the Party has created, which works like a clock, which introduces the young man to the job and management and teaches and qualifies him without causing any harm to the work in general. In 1946, however, matters were quite different: at that time the great mechanism of the socialist economy was only in embryo. Besides this, we were facing the old wolves of the Yugoslav economy. And not only that. They had long been thinking and consulting with one another and had matters worked out. They were close to one another, could meet and consult whenever and as much as they wished, and found a thousand and one tricks to outwit us.

Hence, in these conditions Nako was obliged to appeal to me. At that time, of course, I, too, could not pretend that I knew more than Nako about the «fine» problems of finance, credit, investments, etc. As for Kogi, he had reached the

limit of his capacities as an «economist» when he became a quartermaster of the stores at Panarit at the time of the war. Now he was concerned with «other problems». Within the Party and the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs he had to apply the directives of Ranković, had to do his evil work in secrecy.

Nevertheless, I had by all means to send Nako instructions and directives as clear and accurate as possible. Amongst all the other work, at that period, I completed a real course for the «intensive assimilation» of problems of the economy. For whole days and nights I read that literature from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin that I could get hold of in French, which dealt with problems of the economy, summoned specialists in finance and other sectors (among them I shall not forget Naum Stralla), sought their opinions and, in this way, arrived at a certain conclusion and wrote to Nako:

«Carefully, but clearly and accurately, express to the comrades our major reservations on the question of the equalization of the currencies. Tell them that the different levels of economic development of the two countries do not provide possibilities for a fair and realistic equalization of our lek with their dinar. Such an action is made even more unrealistic by the different levels of pay of the workers of the two countries; the different prices of goods which are produced in our country and those for their products, etc. Tell them that, apart from other things, such an action will give rise to many problems of a social and political character for us amongst the people and the confidence of the masses in our currency will decline, etc.»

Likewise, in a concrete way I transmitted to Nako our serious and well-argued opinions about the impossibility of the immediate unification of prices, about the difficulties and dangers which might arise from the customs union, etc. I instructed him to talk dispassionately with Kidrić, or if possible with Tito himself, and send us their reply immediately. However, a week went by and no news from Nako.

During those days Koçi Xoxe had gone there by special

invitation «in order to honour our friends in the celebration of the 7th November»! He, too, sent me an occasional radiogram in which he wrote about the red-carpet reception they were giving him, about the evenings when Ranković and the others drank «thirty toasts to the health of Albania» (!) and even boasted to me that at one of the official dinners he had been drinking with the Yugoslav comrades until four in the morning, but he had lasted to the end like a man and had not disgraced us!

I could not contain my anger:

«Are they in their right minds or not?!» I said to the comrade who handed me the radiogram from the «Comrade General». «We are bursting our brains and they tell us about how long they have gone on drinking. Where's Nako's radiogram?»

«We are decoding it,» the comrade told me. «We gave priority to the 'Comrade General', because it might have been urgent news for you.»

«Very well,» I said, «but I urgently need 'Comrade Plan'.»

Finally, they brought me Nako's radiogram. It was late, but he had filled the first two or three paragraphs with noughts: «Import-export 1 000 000 new francs¹; the mines 2 000 000; the Bank 4 000 000; oil 4 000 000; electric power 2 000 000; the railways 4 000 000!!»

All these series of noughts there in black and white were the amounts which the Yugoslav side was offering us for the year 1947, which they promised they would invest in 6 joint companies that would be set up. Besides, they also promised 3-4 factories, consumer goods, etc., etc., and then came the conditions: all these chains of noughts on paper would be turned into shekels, or more correctly, into shackles, if we were to accept the creation of companies, the unification of prices, the customs union, etc., etc.

As for my reservations and objections, the Yugoslavs had

¹ In the first years after Liberation the monetary unit was the franc.

given this reply: «An expression of no confidence in the fraternal spirit of the Economic Convention»!

I called the comrades together again and we began to discuss what Nako had written to us. But now he was in a great «hurry». The following morning they handed me another radiogram of half a line:

«Urgently await reply about yesterday's material»!

For two or three days on end (they were the last days of November) Nako continued to send brief radiograms: the «friends» were demanding an urgent reply, the draft communiqué had been prepared, moreover, Nako had been appointed to draft it (!). Even the date for the signing had been set — November 27. Only our reply was awaited: yes or no! Meanwhile Koci Xoxe had returned and, apart from lengthy descriptions of his valour with the šljivovica, he did not hesitate to pour out all his talent in the field of profound understanding of economic problems! He swore that the signing of the convention would be the open Sesame for us like in the tale of Ali Baba and the forty robbers.

«Don't look a gift horse in the mouth!» he told us. «They say, 'Here you are — take it!' and we are afraid!»

In these conditions we finally decided to say, «Open Sesame!» On November 27 the convention was signed. A day or two later Nako Spiru and his group of collaborators brought us bales of documents and projects and, naturally, also chains of noughts on paper.

From the first meeting I had with Nako my worries and doubts about the step we had taken increased even further.

Apart from some minor exultation, in general Nako's tone was gloomy and pessimistic. Like me, he, too, had the opinion that the treaties which we signed were fraught with dangers and difficulties for us. He told me openly that the «friends» did not allow him any time at all to reflect deeply about the things they served up to him and they replied to our objections and suggestions curtly and with frowning faces.

«This is only an agreement,» I said, «so let us proceed from the idea that it was signed by the two sides with the

best of intentions. Now that its practical application is to begin the advantages or disadvantages of each separate part and treaty will become evident. We shall make the necessary corrections and take all proper measures to avert any danger. I believe that the Yugoslav comrades will be guided by the same spirit.»

«They find it hard to accept any mistake in their opinions or actions,» said Nako with his usual irony and pessimism.

I advised him to set to work and that we would do everything possible from our side, using our heads and exercising care and vigilance, not only to carry our work forward, but also to safeguard and strengthen our internationalist friendship with the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav party.

Later, I was to discuss this theme and all its consequences for us with Nako time after time and, in one way or the other, he was to increase the dose of his objections and reservations about the «sincerity» of the Yugoslav comrades. Once he was almost ready to tell me something more, but suddenly stopped himself, became silent, withdrawn and enigmatic. It seemed that he was hiding something from me. After his suicide, and especially at the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in February 1948, amongst many other things I was to learn something shocking and bitter which had to do with the «enigma» which he was nearly ready to tell me about, but never did tell me.

When he returned from Belgrade, after signing the Convention, he had said in confidence to some comrades, members of his «intellectual élite» (Liri Belishova, Fadil Paçrami, Niko Opari, etc.):

«Well, are the people saying about me that Nako Spiru sold Albania to Yugoslavia just as Ahmet Zog sold it to Italy?!»

It was true that Nako Spiru was known, as well as for many other vices and merits, for his sometimes bitter and sarcastic and sometimes exultant and euphoric expressions, and this expressed his complex and contradictory character. In this context this bitter, hostile statement, too, which he

had made in the intimacy of the members of his «élite» found a certain explanation. But he was gravely mistaken in this assessment and gave himself undue «weight».

In the first place, there could never be any similarity between the evil deed of Ahmet Zog and the motives from which he proceeded in signing treaties with other countries and the aims and motives from which we proceeded in signing treaties with Yugoslavia.

As I said, we set out from the finest aims and on the basis that, first, we had to do with a socialist state. Second, the revolution, which we had carried out and were consistently deepening, did not give Nako, or any other individual person, the possibility to sell or buy Albania as Ahmet Zog did in the past. Now the Party was in power, the people were in power, and they would not and did not allow the freedom and independence of the Homeland to be sold, or even infringed in the least.

Besides this, however, I think that Nako's statement about his «selling of Albania» must certainly have had other, more profound reasons, which went beyond Nako. In the talks which he held for a month in Belgrade he must certainly have been faced with harsher demands and more ferocious pressures than what he wrote in his radiograms, or told us about when he returned. Perhaps the «friends» had hinted or even demanded openly that he should sign for much more than the «economic agreements». The fact that Koçi Xoxe, too, was «invited» to be in Belgrade at the most critical period of the talks to give «support», or perhaps to put pressure on Nako, is another argument for this hypothesis. Nako may have realized that in these agreements Yugoslavia was proceeding from the aim of «tying the hands» of Albania, irrespective of the disguise of fraternal «aid» with which this low-down deal was to be dressed up. Nako opposed them, but the Yugoslavs threatened him with facts and documents from the past which compromised his figure in our eyes (his role behind the scenes at Berat, the secret anti-party letters he sent them, etc.). In this case, the meanness of the petty-bourgeois spirit prevailed

over the revolutionary spirit of Nako Spiru. He did not have the courage to tell us in detail what aims the Yugoslavs were concealing, but only pointed out «some reservations» (we ourselves had not just reservations but serious criticisms), and after receiving our authorization, he put his signature to a series of agreements which he knew were not fair and were anti-Albanian. Hence, if Nako knew that he was going to sign such an anti-Albanian document, then his action is inexcusable, because he did not warn the Party at the proper time of what was hidden behind the convention.

Moreover, even when he returned he did not find the courage and strength to tell us in detail what he may have known and which, undoubtedly, he did know.

The fact is, however, that after this Nako began to stay closer to me. He came frequently to meet me and consult with me, raised problems (and did not raise them badly), worked zealously and strove to ensure that matters in the economy proceeded as well as possible in the interests of the development and strengthening of our country.

A number of specialists, advisers and technicians of different sectors came from Yugoslavia at that time for the implementation of the agreement, and especially for the setting up of joint companies. At the same time, at our request, a number of Soviet advisers and specialists began to come, too.

Thus, the whole first period of 1947 turned into an intensive period of work for putting into practice those tasks which emerged from our economic agreements with Yugoslavia, along with other tasks. In the course of this work all the problems and difficulties which were implicit in the signed agreements were to emerge clearly. Among those which became immediately obvious was the open distortion from the Yugoslav side of the character of the customs union. We accepted this union and made every effort to ensure that this measure would serve to facilitate the exchanges between our two countries. As a preliminary condition to avoid confusion in the market and in all the exchanges, we proceeded

from the principle that, while the trade between us must truly be carried on without customs duties, it must always be guided and controlled by the state; that the lek in Yugoslavia and the dinar in Albania should circulate and be exchanged not in a spontaneous way, but on the basis of official accords; that the enterprises or private persons of one country should not be allowed to buy whatever they wanted and as much as they wanted in the other country outside the official accords, etc.

The Yugoslavs violated and rejected these basic premises. They described our just objections as «capitalist stands» (!), claimed that «we wanted to look after our narrow interests», that «we were violating the spirit of friendship», etc. Consequently, after pressure from the side of the Yugoslavs, the borders were opened and private and state Yugoslav enterprises, as well as smugglers from Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, etc., poured in and seized everything they found in our market at very cheap prices. Consequently, our market was being completely emptied of goods and the bank filled with useless dinars. Later, we were to strongly oppose this real robbery (we sold goods and bought dinars!), but the fact is that the market was ruined. The dinars accumulated were no good to us, because there was nothing to buy in the Yugoslav free market. Tito and company had taken measures, had rationed everything, and so the only things we could buy in the Yugoslav free market were children's toys, dolls and whistles!

We were seeing similar distortions in the other agreements, too. The creation of «joint companies» was decided, the first concrete steps were taken, but our partners wanted only to grab their part of the profit without putting a single dinar into the investment fund. They accorded us a credit of 2 billion dinars. But what did they realize from this credit they advertised so loudly? Almost nothing. On the basis of this credit, apart from some consumer goods, they were to supply us, and did supply us, with 3-4 «factories», one for soap, one to make ropes, a sugar factory and, I believe, also a flour mill.

What were these in reality and how much did they cost?

The Yugoslav «experts» set the prices. They cost us the earth! The famous «factories» were only scrap iron, not even properly painted. The sugar factory, which we built in Korça, cost us a large sum in leks for its construction, we gave it the honoured name of Ali Kelmendi, but it did not work for one minute and did not produce a single gram of sugar in the real sense of the word.

The rope factory consisted of a few handicraft tools from the time of Prince Nikola. A few wheels, a few wooden axels and a drum to strip the hemp which it damaged so that it could never be made into string, let alone rope. The whole «factory» was installed in a shed in Rrogozhina, and so it was with all of them.

As I said, all these and others like them cost us extremely dear, because everything had to be paid for with oil, bitumen, minerals, etc. However, we ought to be «satisfied» with this robbery we were suffering, because the Yugoslavs «were making sacrifices» for us by giving us the «credit» (which was never realized), as well as endless «advice» and other «orientations» in all fields.

They were quite unscrupulous in these «orientations» and sometimes made themselves utterly ridiculous with them. At the beginning of 1947 we sent Tuk Jakova as minister of our legation in Yugoslavia to replace Hysni Kapo whom we recalled to Tirana, because I felt the need for his opinion, will and loyalty to the cause of the Party.

So, Tuk went to Belgrade and in a meeting with Tito to present his letter of credentials, after he replied to the Marshal's questions about the weather and the climate in Albania, he received the instructions of the occasion:

«You must learn the Serbian language!» was Tito's first instruction, «because in this way we shall be able to talk together confidentially and with the others; you must learn as much as possible from our experience and inform us about the achievements and needs of Albania.»

Tito had gone into such detail about our situation that Tuk had been greatly moved to see that the great Marshal

had found time to interest himself in the sheep and goats of Albania and to tell him from his own mouth that goats are destroyers of forests!

After this «touching» meeting, a visit was organized for Tuk to acquaint himself with Bosnia-Hercegovina, where he was so inspired by what he saw and heard that, apart from writing detailed letters, the Muse prompted him to come to Tirana to report to us personally.

«In Sarajevo,» he told me, «the deputy-prime minister of the Republic, himself, received me and we had a great talk and he gave me very valuable advice. It is of interest for our conditions.»

«Yes, yes,» I said, «I'm listening to you.»

«Especially about goats and sheep!» said Tuk to my surprise. «They asked me whether we do or do not have local sheep and goats and whether they do or don't have horns. I told them they have horns like pitchforks. 'Do you know what we are doing?' the comrades in Sarajevo told me. 'We are getting rid of the traditional goats and replacing them with Vojvodina or Maltese goats. Each goat produces 5-6 kilos of milk and eats only grass. A handful of grass and 5 kilos of milk! We increase production and save the forests! Because goats destroy the forests!' Then,» continued Tuk, «they asked about us and they were shocked when I told them that many households in our villages have 10, 20 or more goats and sheep of the traditional local breed and in each flock we keep 2-3 billy-goats and rams.»

Our ambassador was «astounding» me with these «pearls of wisdom» he was telling me, but I was more «astounded» at the profound interest of the Yugoslavs in our goats and sheep! So I allowed Tuk to continue and I listened to this wonder through to the end.

«Do you know what they do in Sarajevo?» he went on to tell me. «With one pedigree ram or billy-goat they inseminate whole flocks. They have eliminated all billy-goats and rams running with the flocks. They advised me that we, too, should follow suit. 'Slaughter all the billy-goats and rams and the

nanny-goats, too, because they damage the forests,' they told me. 'We will give you pedigree flocks. We need those goats of yours for meat and hides, but we need the horns, in particular! We buy the horns at the highest price!'

I looked Tuk right in the eye to convince myself whether or not he was in his right mind, but he was speaking quite calmly and seriously. I had no doubt that the things he told me were true. The Yugoslavs wanted horns! There was no joke or any insinuation about this! It was precisely so, but what they needed the horns for remained a mystery to me for some time. However, the day was to come when Savo Zlatić would enter my office with a long sheet of paper and lay it before me:

«You are not carrying out your contractual obligations!» he protested. «You have not sent us so many thousand tons of oil!»

«I know this,» I replied, «and I am sorry about it. But have you asked why? The joint company, ours and yours, extracts the oil. Under the contract you should first have brought the respective equipment for drilling wells and extracting the oil. These you should have brought a year ago, but you have not done so and, as you know, the oil does not flow up of its own.»

Zlatić continued with two or three other items and then, unwittingly, mentioned a word which had almost been erased from my memory: horns!

«What's that?» I asked. «What was the article you mentioned?»

«Several hundred quintals of horns,» he said in a serious tone. «We have signed a contract and you have not fulfilled it!»

«Our ambassador in Belgrade has told me something about this,» I said, «but to tell the truth, it seemed to me so ridiculous that I did not want to believe it. However, since it is apparently true, why do you need the horns?»

«Why do we need them?!» asked Zlatić, scandalized at my «ignorance». «Those beautiful combs and hair-clips we sell you are made of horn!»

I laughed inwardly for a moment, but quickly pulled myself together. However, I was happy that my «ignorance» in this field impelled me to prevent the sacrifice of the nanny-goats, rams and billy-goats of Albania, because our friends wanted the horns.¹

Thus, we were to become accustomed to hearing «accusations» and complaints from our friends even over ridiculous things, like the story I have just mentioned and others like this. Only today do such stories sound ridiculous, but at the time when they occurred they caused us serious difficulties and obstacles.

Of course, we could not remain indifferent, therefore, collisions with our «friends» were to be inevitable. Indeed, even when we still had not realized that we were dealing with robbers, that is, when we still called them friends, with prudence and sincerity we continued to present to them our criticisms and to propose the respective alterations, corrections and adjustments. But it seemed that this was just what they were waiting for: they accumulated our criticisms, «discovered» others even where none existed, and prepared themselves for a new anti-Albanian attack. It would not be long before we were face to face with this attack.

Behind Tito's accusation of «two lines» and «anti-Yugoslavism» in the leadership of the CPA

The new attack, which is known in history as Tito's first accusation against our Party, the Yugoslav leadership launched at the end of June 1947 through its main emissary in Albania, the ill-famed Savo Zlatić.

¹ In the «White Book — Yugoslav-Albanian relations 1939-1948», published in Belgrade in 1949, the Yugoslav officials complained, among other things, that «the Albanian side did not fulfil its contractual obligations to sell the Yugoslav side 245 quintals of horns.»

Some time had passed since this top Yugoslav emissary had come to our country as the delegate of the CC of the CPY to the CC of the CPA, recommended by Tito and his men as a «very good» comrade, «with great experience in party matters», «an expert on questions of the economy», «a qualified organizer and co-ordinator», etc.

In short, this was a person with such all-round qualities that we were obliged to think that Yugoslavia would be weakened and was making a great sacrifice in sending this «marvel» to us, but then Albania would be strengthened!

In fact, Savo Zlatić was sent to lead all the Yugoslav activity in Albania. He came to take in hand all the reins for the final attack which the Titoites were preparing against our freedom and territorial integrity and, no doubt, in the imagination of the Yugoslav leadership played the role of the imperial viceroy in the «Albanian province». *De jure* he was engaged with official relations in Albania, but *de facto* he was engaged in political, economic, military, espionage, and other matters. All the Yugoslav citizens, who worked in various sectors in Albania, were under his orders. He was «responsible» for all party work and any other activity of the members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia who worked in our country.

To give the devil his due, he was wily. He set about his work with great tact and diplomacy. He knew how to pose as a comrade who was not going to meddle with the affairs of Albania and our Communist Party.

«Nevertheless,» he told us, «I shall always be at your disposal, whenever you feel the need for my assistance.»

He seemed to be calm, authoritative, and serious, spoke slowly and his words were prudent, carefully considered and extremely polite.

At first, our meetings with him were very rare and this came about, apart from his concern «to avoid interfering in our internal affairs», because of language barriers.

At the first meeting which I had with him I spoke about the situation in our country and in our Party and deliberately

mentioned the discussions which we had held in our Political Bureau about the re-examination of the events at the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the Party, about the non-too-healthy situation in our leadership (all this he knew, indeed knew more than I did, because he came from Belgrade), and I told him also about the enlargement of the Bureau with three new comrades, Hysni Kapo, Gogo Nushi and Kristo Themelko.

«I insisted on this enlargement of the Bureau,» I told him, «because with the situation that the Berat Plenum created for us it was difficult to advance. The new comrades will undoubtedly enliven our Political Bureau and help to deal thoroughly with all the old reservations and distortions.»

He listened to me all attention, nodding his head with the same rhythm when I spoke both about our successes and about our weaknesses, but took no stand, either good or bad.

I told him that we would consult with him about various matters so that he could help us. I told him also that from time to time other comrades of the Bureau might discuss various problems with him. He agreed to this method of work, but in essence, his desire was to take part in the proceedings of the Bureau. But we had suffered from this before and we had learnt from it. Odriçan and Berat would not be repeated.

Once, when I was not in Tirana (as far as I remember I was on holiday), Savo Zlatić took part in a meeting of our Political Bureau. There, under the pretext of giving his experience, he had discussed the method of work in the Bureau, and concentrated especially on economic questions, how these important problems should be studied, how they should be solved, etc.

It was reported to me that at this meeting there were differences of views about the economic situation in our country between Koçi and Nako. In fact, this was the only meeting of the Bureau in which Savo Zlatić took part. Meanwhile, he held meetings with various members of the Bureau. His contacts with me were made through Koçi Xoxe, as an intermediary, and the three of us together discussed those

things which he had to tell us. First of all, his interventions in the initial meetings were made with good behaviour and great tact (and this continued right up to the time when he launched the attack).

What did he inform us about in these meetings? Nothing apart from telling us about various organisms which had been created in the state apparatus of Yugoslavia. He made some superficial comments about the views of Kardelj on the organization of councils and the state power (we had received information about them previously), spoke to us in exulted terms about Tito's speeches on the Front, pointing out that the question of the Front was «something new» that Tito had added to Marxism (!), and that all the people's democracies ought to study the experience of Tito attentively and apply it!

The «all-rounder» Zlatić wanted to give us the impression that he was a very competent person on all matters, but the impression was growing steadily stronger on me that his only competence was in intrigues. His so-called aid had no more than minimal value. As I said, he reported to us on things which we had long known and, moreover, what he told us amounted to brief summaries of directives which they sent him from Belgrade, plus deductions which he had drawn from reading the articles or speeches of Tito and Kardelj. We never saw him enlarge on these problems, go into them profoundly, or tell us anything new. This was the nature of the «official» activity of Savo Zlatić. However, his work as a back-room organizer for the sabotage of our plan, as leader of the silent war, which he was preparing against us and against the Soviet civilian and military advisers who were in Albania, was very extensive.

This work of sabotage against us and discrimination against the Soviet advisers was carried out gradually and constantly extended through the Yugoslav specialists, engineers and technicians and all the officials of the Yugoslav legation. The inspirer of all this hostile work was Savo Zlatić, but, as the double-dealer he was, he took all measures to hide his hand in this dirty work. However, our work con-

tinued on its normal course, on the right road, despite the efforts and the continual frictions we had with the Yugoslavs in the practice of the work. Of course, this situation was not to the liking of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its plenipotentiary, Savo Zlatić.

In the first months of 1947, in particular, when practice was showing up the shortcomings and distortions in the agreements or the economic treaties with Yugoslavia, as we called them at that time, we began to raise our voice loudly for the revision and correction of them in a right and friendly way. Since the Yugoslav side was carrying out none of its obligations under the signed contracts, and the danger existed that the plan for the year 1947 would remain only on paper, we sent Nako Spiru to Belgrade in April to talk quietly and openly with the «pontiff» of the Yugoslav economy — Kidrić, and his collaborators. Once again they kept Nako hanging around with plenty of excuses and promises. But now our criticisms were based on clear calculations, now we had learnt how to navigate through the whirlpools of the acute economic problems. The Yugoslav leadership sensed the danger that we would discover the anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian essence of the agreements and its other actions and, in order to avoid an undesirable attack, chose the course of a surprise counter-attack.

By the middle of June Koçi Xoxe came to me and said:

«The Yugoslav comrades are displeased with us.»

«Displeased? Why?» I asked him.

«Because we are not completing the work for the unification of prices, but delaying it. This is what Comrade Zlatić told me.»

«But does Zlatić know why we have delayed it?» I asked Koçi.

«I tried to tell him something,» muttered Koçi, «but he did not want to discuss the matter and only expressed their discontent to me.»

I did not give this any importance, because at that time the «discontent» of the Yugoslavs over trifles was endless.

On one occasion Zlatić, this great delegate of the CC of the CPY to our Central Committee, came to me and complained:

«Such and such a specialist of yours has impaired the prestige of Yugoslavia.»

«Is that so?!» I asked him. «We must look into this matter, but first, tell me in what direction he has impaired the honour of friendly Yugoslavia.»

«He accompanied our cotton specialist to Berat and rejected the advice of our comrade in front of the farmers!»

«But what was the advice of your comrade? Was it on political matters?» I asked pointedly.

«No, it was about the cotton,» replied Zlatić all seriousness. «Our specialist said, 'It's done like this,' and yours said the opposite.»

«And you call this violation of your prestige?!» I asked him in a tone of mixed surprise and sarcasm. «Leave the specialists to get on with their discussions, Comrade Zlatić, because this does not impair your prestige or ours or even that of the cotton!»

«No, no!» insisted Zlatić. «Matters must be gone into more deeply. How does your comrade know all those things he said about cotton?! You have no experience. It turns out that someone has taught him. It turns out that he prefers his own opinion or, more precisely, the opinion of those that have taught him. Is this not an insult to Yugoslavia?!»

I understood he was not referring to us alone. The «someone» who had taught (?) our comrade, according to Zlatić, was one of the Soviet specialists. For some time we had been aware of this «new» method in the assessment of our stands and actions on the part of the Yugoslavs. Whenever we raised any opposition, they immediately thought that the Soviets «had prompted us», although, without denying their merits, in 1946 and even 1947 the Soviets regarded us mostly through the eye of the Yugoslavs. I turned to Zlatić and gave him the reply that he deserved. Quietly, with seriousness and concern combined, I advised him to be more tolerant in

his conclusions, both with his collaborators and with us. He went away muttering and, indeed, begged my pardon for worrying me, but added, «I proceed from the principle that we can discuss everything.»

He came back again subsequently over similar trifling matters, but we had always parted with the problems «cleared up». This time, however, the «displeasure» which they transmitted to me through «Comrade» Xoxe was a warning of something stronger. Two or three days after this Nako came to me and said:

«Comrade Zlatić told me that a second line is crystallizing in the Party in Albania!»

«What's that!» I exclaimed staring at him in surprise.

«According to Zlatić,» said Nako, speaking quietly and with a note of irony, «there are two economic lines in our country: the line of the Central Committee, which is correct in principle, and, parallel with this, the concretization of a second line in practice, contrary to that of the Central Committee!»

«Astonishing!» I said. «But what did he base this on?»

«He did not offer any argument.»

«But didn't you ask him?»

«He put it forward in principle, and I did not consider it in order to prod him,» Nako replied blushing red.

«You made a mistake!» I told him. «Zlatić's statement is not an observation, it's an accusation. You should have gone into it at length and demanded precise details.»

«You are right,» said Nako, «but I did not take it so seriously!»

I instructed him to meet Zlatić immediately and to talk the matter over thoroughly with him. The talk was held and the truth began to come to light somewhat better.

«They base their accusation on the failure, on our part, to carry out the unification of the common prices,» Nako told me. «For this they lay the blame on the economic sector, that is, on me. According to Zlatić, we had decided that the list of our prices should have been completed at the end

of May, but up till now it has still not come out. From this they say that I am obstructing the correct line of our Central Committee. Hence, I am allegedly pursuing a second line in the Central Committee.»

It seemed to me impossible that the Yugoslavs could base such an accusation on quite an obviously stupid reason, so I decided to continue the talks with Zlatić, except that now I sent Koçi Xoxe, who clearly enjoyed the sympathy of the Yugoslav friends, together with Nako. About the 20th or the 21st of June they talked with Zlatić and reported back to me, and even brought me a two-page letter in which Zlatić presented the Yugoslav «arguments» in support of the accusation they made against us.

All the arguments about «two lines in the leadership» amounted to nothing, but Koçi Xoxe had taken them extremely seriously.

«These things are grave,» he said to me in Nako's presence. «We must look into them thoroughly and seriously, I think we should put them before the leadership.»

«What, do you also accept that the Central Committee has been wrong, that a 'second line' is crystallizing among us?» I asked him.

«I didn't say exactly so!» Xoxe softened his tone. «The Yugoslav comrades don't say it of the whole Central Committee, either. Indeed, they say that the line of the Party is correct in principle, but is being distorted in practice, turned into a counterline. The comrades of the respective sector are doing this. Comrade Nako, as responsible for that sector, must explain this to us in the Bureau.»

Nako could hardly sit still in his chair, and said to Koçi angrily:

«I agree, let us raise the question of the 'counterline' in my sector before the Bureau and we shall see who is right! Don't forget that for a year we have been wanting to raise the question of your sector before the Bureau, but you still haven't presented the material on the organizational questions!»

«Don't hop off to another branch,» Xoxe «broke out». «We are not talking about the organizational matters, because I don't permit two lines there! We are talking about the economic lines.»

As I have said, quarrels between them had erupted long before.

«This is no place for your rows,» I said to them, «and I don't think the accusation has to do with Nako at all. It is much more serious. Let us raise it in the leadership and thrash it out thoroughly.»

After the presentation which I made of Zlatić's accusation, the leadership of the Party rejected it, and even Koçi Xoxe could not object. In the first days of July I summoned Zlatić and had a long tumultuous talk with him which, as far as I remember, we continued with intervals over two days.¹

«With Koçi Xoxe, first of all, and then with Nako Spiru,» I told him, «you have made what we might call politely the 'remark' that a second line, opposed to that of our Central Committee, is crystallizing amongst us!»

«That is correct!» agreed Zlatić.

«As we understand it,» I continued, «this serious remark of yours is based on two arguments, first, because the prices from our side should have been unified in May and this work dragged out till the end of June, and, second, that at the end of May the problems of rates of pay were not definitively resolved, but are being resolved about a month or so late, that is, in July. Is this the case, or am I mistaken?»

«*Tako je, tako je!*»* agreed Zlatić with feigned politeness. «Indeed, I have handed over in writing my theses on this problem!» he added.

«Do you still stand by them?» I asked him.

«Naturally!» he replied.

«Then, excuse me,» I said with a politeness which could hardly conceal my inward anger, «but you have been hasty

¹ This talk was held on the 4th and 6th of July 1947.

* That's so, that's so (Serb. in the original).

in your judgments if you are saying with sincerity those things you have alleged.»

«Please,» he said, «you are insulting me. I am the emissary of a country and a party which have proved themselves...»

«Precisely because you are their emissary, I am sorry that you are lowering their prestige with such impermissible accusations and about a comrade who is quite young.»

I saw his expression change.

«Listen, Comrade Zlatić,» I continued, «let us take matters more quietly and examine what is hasty, your accusation about our line, or my accusation about your hasty and unfounded judgment. You base your accusation on the fact that the two 'central' problems of prices and pay rates were solved by our side not at the end of May but a month or so later, at the beginning of July. Because of thirty days' delay you come out with such accusations?! Is this reasonable? Even simple formal actions or the examination of a letter are frequently delayed for several days, let alone such important problems which have to do with the economy of the whole country. We are friends,» I went on, «we have created various links which have been continually extended. We have our obligations for the development and strengthening of these links just as you have your obligations. In practice, however, it occurs that there are some things which our comrades cannot do, and there is also ignorance, procrastination, negligence and lack of understanding. But we find the same phenomena with your comrades, too. Even in your country it has occurred and does occur, for one or the other reason, that a problem or ten problems are not solved precisely at the time envisaged. If we open the contracts, plenty of such examples can be found. Is that not so?»

«Tako je!» repeated Zlatić like a parrot.

«Well, then,» I said, «should we accuse your Central Committee of having a 'second line'? Should we accuse you that you say one thing and do another? You would be angry about this, wouldn't you?»

He lowered his head, noted something down, but his favourite expression «tako je» did not come from his lips this time.

«The thing is, Comrade Zlatić, that we should judge matters correctly and with clearer minds. We would not object at all if you were to raise truly worrying problems and arguments, but on the contrary, would thank you. However, these things that you say are not arguments.»

I saw that he was sitting tense and rigid, waiting another opportunity to object, so I continued:

«Even if we consider the delay of a month a matter of importance, have you thoroughly considered the problem of why this delay has come about?»

«There are various reasons!» he said curtly.

«Agreed!» I continued. «I shall list mine and, then, you add those that I leave out. In regard to our side, if there has been a certain delay, this has come about because the comrades of the base, and indeed of the centre, are only now learning certain things in connection with prices. Have you taken account of the fact that only two or three years ago the majority of those who are now engaged in the work for the organization of the state in our country could hardly read?! Moreover, since this problem has to do with an accord established between our two countries, we have mobilized the best forces we have in the economy in order to carry out this work at the proper time. And merely because they were a month late with it, you accuse us of having a 'second line'! Our view is that from this delay we cannot arrive at the deduction that there is a distortion of line or a second line in this. There might be anything else, but never a second line. This,» I told him, «is not only my opinion. I put my opinion before the leadership of our Party and also presented to them your 'theses' and the 'arguments' which you provide and all the comrades rejected them as without foundation and out of order.»

He raised his head from the piece of paper on which he was taking notes and stared at me almost as if to ask me, «Is it true that all of them agreed with you?!»

However, he drew in his horns again and said nothing.

«Nevertheless,» I went on, «the main cause of the delay does not rest with us, or with any ignorance or negligence of ours. The main cause rests with you, with your comrades, beginning from Sergej Krajger, as the main representative of the Yugoslav side for the development of economic relations with us, and including all his collaborators here and other comrades of yours in Belgrade.»

«How can you say such a thing?» the wily Zlatić broke his silence angrily. «You are throwing mud on our aid and sacrifices, you...»

«Not at all,» I interrupted him. «And let us put such general terms aside. Let us refer to the facts:

«You know that the discussion between our two sides on the problem of the unification of prices and pay rates began at the end of January or the beginning of February of this year. In February we wanted to know how the prices would be equalized between Albania and Yugoslavia. At the beginning of March, Krajger, through one of his aides, Perović, presented us with some lists about the equalization of prices and agreement was reached that we would begin the joint work for building the structure of our prices. However, your comrades delayed this work until the end of March. The specialists whom you sent simply travelled round Albania and did nothing. This was hindering the drafting of our plan and our budget. Krajger insisted that our prices should be set quickly from Tirana, while we and even Krajger's aides said that this work had to be done in the terrain. Agreement was reached to go to the terrain, to the enterprises, but your comrades preferred Belgrade to the Albanian terrain. They returned to Tirana at the end of April, but now with a new proposal: that a stereotyped unification of prices in the two countries should not be done but we should proceed on the basis of a common structure of prices! We studied your new proposals, which seemed to us more fair, and in the first days of May gathered all our economists and sent them to the base. Our comrades were instructed to do

the work of four or five months in less than one month. At the beginning of June we completed our work as best we could and handed the results to your side to examine. In the middle of June they were returned to us with a number of further criticisms and orientations to discuss which we will need at least ten to fifteen days. This is the history, Comrade Zlatić, and you know this history very well. Therefore, I have the right to ask you: Why did your comrades hold us up for four or five months on end? And by what right do you blame us for your fault?!»

Now Zlatić could hardly contain himself.

«Causes and justifications can be sought and found,» he said, «but I insist that, regardless of your presentation, these problems could have been solved more quickly. We had studied the method of setting prices in Yugoslavia and there was no reason to go deeply into studies and analyses in the enterprises here. Our prices could be applied in your country, too, and there was no reason to go through all the stages.»

«Excuse me,» I said, «but as far as I know you are also a specialist in the economy! How can the prices of our products be set the same as those in Yugoslavia when the conditions of production, the raw materials, the qualification of the workers, the productivity, the level of technology, etc., etc., are completely different?!»

However, diplomacy works wonders. Zlatić knew how to seal his lips and not say a word.

I continued with similar arguments to prove that on the other questions, too, such as those of the unification of pay rates, the question of the budget, of our plan for 1947, etc., the blame for the delays did not rest on us at all, but on them.

«If you are satisfied with your work, then you are mistaken,» said Zlatić. «The implementation of the plan carries a great responsibility towards our peoples and also the democratic world. If we do not implement it as we should, Stalin himself will pull our ear. I say that you have not mobilized your cadres as you should have done.»

«We cannot cheer that we have done everything,» I told him. «We are conscious that we need more work, mobilization and knowledge. But for the concrete problems which we are discussing our mobilization has been total. Many things have been demanded from us urgently and insistently from your side and we have thrown all our people into the work for studies, the lists, observations, but as soon as they manage to make some progress, Krajger comes and produces other variants, Kiro Gligorov comes and overturns the former orientations and gives new ones, Perović comes and brings further piles of variants and themes for study. Do you understand what a situation this creates for us?! Instead of getting on with the work, our people are engaged in studies and plans which are worthless, and the fault is not ours. And since you mention Stalin, I am convinced that if he has to pull someone's ear over these things that are occurring, it will not be ours.»

«These are complicated problems,» said Zlatić retreating instantly and I noticed a light twitch in his face. «If the first orientations are changed, this is done in favour of a better, more correct orientation.»

«I fully agree!» I said. «But how long is this going to continue?! You accuse us of 'two lines', because, through no fault of ours, we presented the list of prices thirty days after the set date. What are we to say about you who delayed the plan for 1947 till the end of April and even to this day you have not stated precisely what you are going and what you are not going to give us from the credit which you have accorded us?! You know very well that we had decided that our budget should have been approved in the first months of this year. Kiro Gligorov promised that he would send us a finance specialist in April. To this day the problem of our budget is not being solved because you insist that your specialists should examine it, since the co-ordination of joint plans requires this. What are we to say to you about these five or six months of delay and obstruction?!»

The meeting went on for a long time and I did most

of the speaking. Zlatić put in some short comments, tried to defend himself and repeated what he had said at the outset:

«I insist that two lines are crystallizing!»

When I saw that even after the detailed concrete arguments which I presented to him, he still persisted in his opinion, without presenting any kind of argument to support it and being unable to refute anything of what I presented to him, I said:

«One thing is more than clear. On simply economic matters your accusation about 'two lines' does not hold water. Are you referring to something else?»

«I told you my opinion!» he replied. «Besides, matters should not be regarded simply as economic or political questions. Both are connected. You, for example, did not adopt those lists and that methodology which we had worked out and gave you for the setting of your prices. Your technicians and specialists began everything from the start. Why? Did these comrades have no confidence in our lists and methodology? Such a thing completely obstructs the work, because there cannot be co-ordination between your plan and our plan, if the method of operation in our country is different from that in your country. This seems to me a bad thing. Moreover, this tendency, which is crystallizing, expresses distrust towards Yugoslavia. I have other facts, too, which smell of anti-Yugoslavism!»

«Now you are making the problem much more serious,» I said, «and I do not know whether this is only your personal judgment. From what you say, it turns out that the 'two lines' is not a problem which has to do simply with us, with the economic policy of our leadership, but a problem which has to do with you. That is, it turns out that amongst us there is allegedly a 'pro-Yugoslav' line and an 'anti-Yugoslav' line! Is this what you want to say?!»

«I would not put it in that way,» Zlatić tried to «soften» the accusation, «but there are certain manifestations, certain tendencies leading in that direction.»

«You make very hasty judgments and arrive at mistaken

and harmful conclusions,» I told him. «We have one line and one line only, whether in our internal problems or in our relations with friends, and in this case with you. During the presentation which I have just made I showed with arguments that from our side there has been nothing which has unfairly opposed your opinions, proposals or demands. If we stick to the facts, the opposite has occurred. Don't look for 'anti-Yugoslavisism' amongst us. The discussions, objections, or agreements which we have had quite rightly over various problems, whether economic, political, technical or anything else, can never be called 'anti-Yugoslavisism' or 'pro-Yugoslavisism'. If you have other arguments or facts which lead to that conclusion, then tell us and we shall discuss them.»

«No, this is not the occasion. I stick to what I said. I want only to add that I do everything for the sake of our friendship. We have special relations, and we must safeguard and strengthen them. It must not happen that a few technicians or specialists disorientate us in the general line with the details and manners of their craft.»

«This will never occur from our side,» I told him. «But since we are ending this meeting, I want to repeat to you: I express my regret that you still persist in a conclusion which you should not even have presented. In the name of the leadership of our Party, I tell you that we do not accept it, because it is completely wrong.»

This brought the meeting to an end and I was more than ever convinced that matters with the Yugoslav comrades were becoming more acute and complicated. They were accusing us quite unjustly. But why, I asked myself, even after our detailed and well-argued explanations did they not budge from their positions?! What was hidden behind this insistence of Zlatić on his absurd accusation about «two lines» and what impelled him to exert the pressure precisely at this moment?!

Everything dubious and obscure which remained from the accusations of Zlatić and from the meeting I had with him was very soon to become clear.

Two or three days after I ended this meeting with him we received a very pleasant news: a government delegation of the PR of Albania headed by me would be welcomed in Moscow. We were to leave about the 12th or the 13th of July 1947.

I informed Zlatić of this news on the eve of our departure, but the way in which he received the information I gave him made a profound impression on me: his face muscles twisted a little, his eyebrows rose and I noticed that his smile seemed to cost him a great effort.

«I am delighted,» he said coldly. «Perhaps you will have the occasion to meet Stalin, too.»

This was the moment to add ironically: «So that he can pull our ear,» but I restrained myself. However, I suspected that he must have known in advance, possibly before we did, the fact that we were going to Moscow. There and then a series of questions came to my mind: could Zlatić have made all those accusations and exerted that pressure a few days ago because he knew that we were soon to go to Moscow?! Could he regard this visit as a sign of «anti-Yugoslavism»? I had reasons for these doubts and time proved that my suspicions were well founded, indeed, they were much milder than the bitter reality.

To send a top-level delegation to the Soviet Union was an ardent desire which we had long cherished in our hearts. Like every communist, I personally could hardly await the opportunity to see the homeland of the October Revolution which the great Lenin led, to acquaint myself at first hand with the experience of the Soviets, to learn from them and to hear directly the words, advice or criticisms of the great Stalin. We were his pupils, and would listen with great attention and respect to every word he would say to us. In short, our visit to the Soviet Union was not only a desire, but also a need. On account of the war we had waged, the line which we pursued, the course on which we were struggling to lead Albania, we thought that we deserved the honour of going to the Soviet Union. We had

expressed this to the Soviet comrades who were in Albania in the first years, had also sought the aid of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in this direction and, later, when the embassies of the Soviet Union in Tirana and ours in Moscow were opened, in one way or the other, we had expressed our desire officially.

The replies were all smiles, but the smiles did not say anything. Why was this?! Was there some mistake in our course and our work which had become an obstacle? We were not without shortcomings, but we could not find any cause such as to close the way to us. Then, there was something else we did not understand: if we had mistakes, then why didn't they tell us this openly as one communist to another?

Long after, we were to learn the truth. The Yugoslavs were the obstacle to our going to Moscow.

Tito himself and his associates did everything in their power to keep the road to Stalin closed to us as long as they could, if possible for ever.

They struggled to create the opinion everywhere that for us the «centre» of everything was Belgrade, that for us Tito was «the Stalin who outdid Stalin»! Regrettably, this propaganda did not fail to have some effect at that time. Not only had faithful agents of the Titoites, like Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and others, adopted and propagated this idea, but a number of other comrades, too, had the idea implanted in them that «it is Tito who can go to Stalin», while we «must go only to Tito», that «we have no reason to go to Moscow, Tito goes there for Yugoslavia and Albania and raises his problems and ours with Stalin».

At that period the slogan «the road to Moscow runs through Belgrade» had become fashionable in the judgments and opinions, not only of the Yugoslavs and their agents in our ranks, but also of a number of other comrades.

After his return from one of his countless trips to Belgrade, Kristo Themelko came to me one day and «reported»:

«They could not have welcomed us better!» he began

all exultation. «They invited us to a big meeting with the Yugoslav leaders. They were talking about the future of Belgrade, and Tito said that Belgrade would grow and extend and become the centre of the Balkans. 'All the new democracies of Europe will come here to gain experience,' he said.»

It was the time when the Information Bureau had just been formed and, as is known, at first its centre was in Belgrade and the theoretical organ of the Information Bureau, *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy!* was published there. This assisted Tito and company to present themselves and Belgrade in their propaganda as the centre of the Balkans and the centre of Central Europe, and even as the «centre of the people's democracies»! They exploited this fact in our direction, especially, to close the doors to us to relations with the other fraternal countries and to keep us completely bound to Yugoslavia.

It was strange! Whenever we put forward the idea of sending a delegation to the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, the Yugoslavs became so annoyed that they could not hide their feelings at all. And when, in the end, some low-ranking delegation managed to go to one of these countries, then it «would be put» under the tutelage or the surveillance of the Yugoslav gangsters. The secret aims of Tito towards us and towards others required that in the international arena, even when we spoke through our own mouth, we should say only those things which suited the Yugoslavs and repeat what the Yugoslavs dictated to us from Belgrade. And when we refused to accept this «working practice» with a prompter, the protests of Tito's men would burst out.

This is what occurred with a cultural delegation consisting of Nako Spiru, Nexhmije Hoxha and others, which went to the Soviet Union in May 1947. Our delegation had not settled properly into its hotel when the Yugoslav embassy in Moscow was placed in a state of alarm. The Yugoslav ambassador demanded an urgent meeting with our ambassador in

Moscow, and later the Yugoslav military attaché sought out the Albanian attaché, the wives of the Yugoslav diplomats stuck like glue to the wives of our diplomats and the Yugoslav students to the Albanian students: «Why did your delegation come to Moscow?», «Whom have they met?», «Did they meet Molotov yesterday?», «They say that Mikoyan welcomed them well and an economic agreement was signed,» etc., etc. The radiograms which came from our comrades in Moscow were disturbing and worrying. And to cap it all, a few days after the return of the delegation to Albania the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow, in a quite brutal manner, lodged a protest with our government about the visit of the Albanian cultural delegation to the Soviet Union! He called this visit «a violation of agreements arrived at with Yugoslavia» and ordered that on any other such occasion we must first receive the blessing of Belgrade!¹

In particular, Tito and company did everything in their power to prevent me from making any contact with the sister parties and countries and with the Soviet Union, above all. As it turned out, they had taken «the problem about me» to Stalin, completely distorting and turning our whole situation upside down. Kardelj and Djilas personally have testified to this. They write in their memoirs that, when Tito went to Moscow in 1946, Stalin had allegedly said to him: «I have several requests from Albania to invite an official delegation

1 Amongst other things, the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow expressed himself as follows in connection with the visit of the Albanian cultural delegation to the Soviet Union: «We should understand clearly that our two countries are linked by a wide-ranging economic treaty. We do not understand how at a time when we are linked economically in this way you seek to make other economic and trade agreements with other countries, we cannot understand how you take such actions without consulting us and reaching prior agreement with us. You could make such agreements if you were not in agreement with us. These actions are not good, must not be done in this way again, these things are incompatible with our agreement.» (*Radiogram on the meeting with the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow, June 5, 1947. CAP.*)

headed by Enver Hoxha to Moscow,» and gone on to tell Tito that «up till now we have hesitated because we do not know them well,» that «the Albanians have disagreements in the leadership,» that «the comrades there ask us (?) permission to send, together with the General Secretary, Koçi Xoxe who is the organizational secretary,» etc., etc.!

Whether this conversation really took place and how it developed I do not know and I would not swear to its truth. In the meetings which I had with Stalin in 1947 and afterwards, he never mentioned this conversation which it is claimed he had with Tito and his collaborators. The fact is that my relations with Stalin became very friendly and intimate and Stalin was one of those men who did not dodge the truth regardless of how it stood. Therefore, if the name of Koçi Xoxe was mentioned in this meeting as they claim, this was certainly done by Tito, Djilas and Kardelj. As history proves completely, from the end of the war they did everything possible to ensure that Koçi Xoxe occupied the top positions in the country. Obviously, Tito and Djilas had no reason not to serve up to Stalin their opinion and dreams about their favourite, while deceiving him about the truth. And later, to «divert» attention from the truth they shamelessly attribute their plots to Stalin, at a time when Stalin had no idea that such a person as Koçi Xoxe existed in Albania.

However, their scheme required that Tito's favourite Koçi Xoxe in July 1947 should enjoy the honour which the Yugoslavs tried to do him; through their intervention he displaced Nako Spiru and came to Moscow as deputy-leader of the delegation and even took part in the meetings we had with Stalin, but during the whole time he sat silent like a gawk. He did not say one word and I remember clearly that Stalin did not display the slightest interest in him. If Stalin had known something about him he would have addressed at least one word to him or asked him a question, even if just to satisfy his curiosity about this person who represented the «proletarian conscience» of the CPA!

I have written in detail in a special book of memoirs¹ about my unforgettable meetings with Stalin, therefore, here I want to point out something else: the visit of our delegation to Moscow in July 1947 was to serve as a powerful catalyst to bring out more clearly all the filth which the revisionists of Belgrade were hiding in their relations with us. This was noticed as soon as we returned to Tirana.

Those days Zlatić was preparing to return to Belgrade under the pretext that he was to carry out studies about our draft-five-year plan. I informed him about the credit which the Soviet Union accorded us, told him especially about our impressions, how the Soviet comrades welcomed us and what great joy we felt when we met Comrades Stalin, Molotov and all the other Soviet leaders, etc. He listened to all this with great displeasure and with an icy coldness. I told him also that our minister Tuk Jakova had been sent especially to Belgrade with a letter to inform Tito about the agreement signed with the Soviet Union.

Zlatić went to Belgrade and certainly informed Tito about all these things and, in fact, although Tuk Jakova three times sought an audience from Tito, he was not received by him.

These cold stands made us reflect more deeply. We ourselves had returned from the meetings with Stalin with greater confidence and enthusiasm about the correct line we had followed and were following. The fact is that neither Stalin nor the other comrades, such as Molotov, Zhdanov, whom we met, had said anything against Tito or the people around him, but they had not said anything else about them in the positive sense, either. Only when I mentioned to Stalin the violation of our airspace by Yugoslav aircraft he said to me:

«Are your people not satisfied with your relations with Yugoslavia? It is a good thing that you have friendly Yugoslavia on your border.»

¹ In the book «With Stalin» (Memoirs), Tirana, December 1981, 2nd Eng. ed.

Apart from this, no further mention was made either of Yugoslavia or of our relations with it. However, from the problems that we raised and the opinions which Stalin expressed, we automatically sensed the great contradiction between the orientations which the Yugoslavs gave us and the things that Stalin said. Stalin, for example, was in full agreement with our line for the socialist industrialization of Albania and for the mechanization of agriculture and generously promised and gave us the aid which we asked for, advised us to extend our relations with the other countries, especially with those of people's democracy, etc., etc. Moreover, the manner and tone in which Stalin spoke to us and advised us was completely different from the arrogant, commanding tones of the Yugoslavs.

Now we analysed all these things calmly, made comparisons and arrived at the proper deductions. Among the first measures which we took in this period was the issuing of clearer orientations about the draft-five-year plan which we were preparing. Naturally, it was to be based on our own resources and possibilities at that time, but in regard to aid from abroad we would not confine ourselves only to the «promises» and «orientations» of the Yugoslavs. The credit which Stalin gave us would be included in this draft.

Meanwhile, a real campaign of pressure and attacks on us was launched by the Yugoslavs. Both the officials of the Yugoslav legation in Tirana and the Yugoslav specialists in the central government departments and the economic enterprises quite openly expressed their discontent, indeed their «astonishment», about how we came to sign a trade agreement with the Soviet Union! They described this lawful and, indeed, overdue action of ours as a «violation of the spirit of the Albanian-Yugoslav agreement», as an act which would lead to our ruin! At a «working» meeting the Yugoslav «economic plenipotentiary» in Tirana Sergej Krajger said to our comrades quite openly:

«Albania is like a clock. It cannot work with all kinds of tools. Some may be better, others may be worse, but

whatever they are they must be of the one brand! Not some Yugoslav and some of another production. Since a Yugoslav foundation has been laid in your country, everything that will be built upon it must be Yugoslav alone!»

The Yugoslav legation in Tirana, through its chargé d'affaires Drago Kosmerlij, a great enemy of the Soviet Union, declared officially after our return that, «the policy of the Albanian government towards Yugoslavia has changed since the return of General Hoxha from Moscow».

We heard all these things with a mixture of concern and regret. The reports which came in from round the country were even more disturbing. Cautiously, with some hesitation (and this was understandable), but openly, the comrades from the base were telling us about damage, no longer accidental, but deliberately planned damage by the Yugoslav specialists. We had decided and long ago reached agreement with the Yugoslav side, for example, that the first phase of the Tirana-Elbasan railway should be inaugurated on November 7, 1947, in the context of the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution. In August and September the Yugoslav side produced «arguments» that this could not be achieved. For our part we fulfilled our obligations two to threefold so as to leave no pretext at which they could grasp. After they raised a hundred pretexts, and we overcame all of them, they told us:

«There are no sleepers!»

We mobilized great forces and took to the forests with axes. The sleepers were delivered, but the Yugoslavs did not accept them.

«Our specialists have not branded them on the spot!» they told us.

We cut others and in the end the sleepers were secured. They raised other excuses. Then our youth, who were thoroughly fed up with them, declared to the Yugoslav «specialists»:

«On November 7 the train is going to run. If we are short of rails or sleepers we are ready to lie on the track»

and let the train pass by over our bodies. But we are not going to break the word we have given the Party!»

This wonderful revolutionary spirit of our people filled us with fresh confidence and strength to cope with the mass of difficult problems of those years. The time had gone when we could still have doubts or find «excuses» and «arguments» to cover up the faults of our friends. We were becoming more and more convinced that we were not dealing with true communists «who made mistakes», but with people who were not friends.

Everything from their side turned out to be well calculated and co-ordinated. The time had come for deep reflection. We had shown ourselves to be excessively generous, excessively patient, excessively sincere in our relations with them.

The great gas fires which broke out in Kuçova, the drilling of wells without criteria or studies, the obstructions and delays of every kind on our railway, the losses «on the way» of millions of dinars of credits (we were told, «They were sent from Belgrade, but we don't know where they have been held up»), the lack of progress on the work at the Selita hydro-power station¹ and the worn-out rubbish which we discovered under the fresh paint on the «famous factories», etc., etc., we had excused as the mistakes of individuals, «specialists». Moreover, initially we considered Zlatić's accusation of «two lines» and «anti-Yugoslavism» as a crazy personal opinion. But now everything was becoming clear. It was becoming clear that we were facing anti-Albanian and anti-Marxist sabotage activity planned and guided by the chiefs in Belgrade in order to realize their old ambitions: to hinder the development of our economy and make it completely dependent on theirs, to discredit our Party in the eyes of the broad masses of the people as «a party incompetent to govern the country independently and guide the people towards their future», to discredit the leadership of the Party as incom-

¹ Later it was called the «Lenin» hydro-power station.

petent to cope with the situation, and to combat all those leaders who were an obstacle to the realization of their plans. Their other aim was to combat the trust and love which our Party had for the Soviet Union and, concretely, to weaken the confidence we had in the Soviet advisers, to discredit these advisers and to compel us to demand their withdrawal. This would bring the isolation of our country and our Party from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, would create illusions and bad opinions among the sister parties and, thus, isolated and disorganized, we would easily fall into the Yugoslav trap.

During the summer and autumn of 1947, the efforts of Tito and company to achieve these ambitions became more frenzied than ever. The first accusation which was made of us through Zlatić marked the preparatory stage of this general attack. Our resolute rejection of the accusation, our visit to Moscow and the endless frictions with the Yugoslavs over a whole mass of problems after our return from Moscow led the leadership in Belgrade to the conclusion that they must delay no longer. There was the danger that Albania would slip through their fingers. The next blow, the heaviest and most dangerous up to that time, against our Party and country was being urgently prepared.

VI

TITO PUTS INTO ACTION THE PLAN TO GOBBLE UP ALBANIA

Tito's second accusation. . . «The CC of the CPY is not satisfied with the relations with you» ■ A heated debate with the emissary of the Yugoslav leadership. Tito seeks to turn «Federative Balkans» into a «power» concentrated in his hand. The demand to send back the Soviet advisers ■ On the ill-famed Co-ordination Commission ■ Tito decides to discard his former agent — Nako Spiru. Koçi Xoxe seeks vengeance. Further aggravation of the situation in our Political Bureau ■ Why did Nako Spiru commit suicide? Belgrade demands the liquidation of the General Secretary of the CPA ■ Outbreak of the savage attack against the CPA, its leadership and the line it pursued. Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo acting to realize Tito's plans.

The period from the beginning of November 1947 to March-April 1948 will remain in history as one of the gravest and most dangerous periods which our Party and people have ever gone through. These were the months when we were facing the final attack of the Titoites for the elimination of

the CPA and the gobbling up of Albania. At the same time, however, this was a battle of special importance not only for the Titoites. For us, too, this was one of the sternest and most glorious battles against modern revisionism.

Tito and company were to go on the attack in a terrain with which they were acquainted in detail. During the 5 to 6 years of mutual relations they had gained a thorough knowledge of where their weak points and strong points lay, where they had opponents and where they had supporters amongst us. It was completely the opposite with us. We had just arrived at the opinion that we had to do with the leadership of a party which was not following a correct Leninist course, at least towards us. But the worst of it was that our conclusion about the Yugoslav leadership, as a perfidious leadership which was pursuing an anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian line towards us, could not be stated openly at those moments, even in our Political Bureau. The pro-Yugoslav lobby headed by Koçi Xoxe existed within the Bureau and was striving to take total control. This meant that we had to define and pursue cautious, well-considered tactics, to take steps forward, but the situation and the time required that in our declarations we must say some good words about the Yugoslav «comrades» and Tito's Yugoslavia.

On the other hand, at this stage and in all our battles with the Yugoslav revisionists we were almost alone, facing ferocious enemies with long experience in their infamous, villainous actions. There was no one beside us at those grave moments to tell us whether we were right or wrong, whether we were opposing the leaders in Belgrade correctly or incorrectly. Of course, when I say «no one» I have in mind concrete parties, concrete comrades of sister parties, because we cannot negate a major factor which we always had on our side — Marxism-Leninism. Confrontation of our stands and actions with the guiding theory of the proletariat told us that the only way to save the situation was to oppose the attack from Belgrade firmly, but prudently and cautiously. Nevertheless, both the

situation at that time and our still limited experience made us ask ourselves time after time: «Are we making a mistake?» «Do the others, especially the leadership of the CPSU, not see what the leaders of Belgrade are?!»

In any case, the dagger was pointed right to our hearts and we could not remain idle. Hence we were obliged to face up to the attack from Belgrade alone. All these factors were to make the finale of our first battle against modern revisionism much more difficult and more complex than the other battles to which we would commit ourselves later. Consequently, in this first battle we would also be obliged to pay the «penalty» for the past — for our former excessive trust and sincerity, our lack of experience, our inadequate ideo-political level, the lack of direct aid and support from others, etc. For these and other reasons, at one moment, the existence of the Party, the freedom and independence of the Homeland and the cause of the revolution and socialism in Albania were to be put seriously in doubt.

However, we were to overcome all these things with complete success and were to emerge triumphant from the first direct battle with the Titoite variant of modern revisionism. And when the letters of the CC of the CPSU addressed to the Yugoslav revisionist leadership came into our hands in April 1948 our satisfaction would be great and justified. In the main content of these letters we saw, amongst other things, the confirmation of the correctness of the struggle to which we had committed ourselves. We had done this at a time when we knew nothing about the fact that the leadership of the CPSU, headed by Stalin, had long been waging the same struggle against the Belgrade renegades. The loyalty of our parties to Marxism-Leninism had led us to this common resultant. Precisely in this and nowhere else lies the explanation for the immediate and complete solidarity of our Party and people with the letters of the CC of the CPSU. This also explains the other fact which «astonished» many about how we settled accounts with the Titoites so quickly and con-

sistently. However, this belongs to the final period of this battle and I shall speak more extensively of this when the time comes. Let us return to the commencement of the battle.

Tito's second accusation against the CPA

Early in November 1947, I received a note from Savo Zlatić in which he told me that on the orders of the CC of the CPY he had been charged to have a talk with me and «with Comrade Xoxe» «on some problems of Albanian-Yugoslav relations». After transmitting the order, as the diplomat he was, he did not forget to close his letter by saying that he would be «at our disposal on any day» and in expectation of my reply took the «felicitous opportunity» to present his «good comradely» greetings.

Both the seriousness with which Zlatić gave «the order of the CC of the CPY» and the «good comradely» greetings with which he ended the six lines in telegraphic style, implied to me that what he had to communicate would be extremely important. I summoned Koçi, gave him Zlatić's note and the following day, November 6, 1947, we were facing «the good comrade».

«These things I shall communicate to you,» he opened the conversation, adopting a very stern mien, «have been formulated on the basis of the most recent deductions of the CC of the CPY in connection with our relations. I have to tell you from the outset also that Comrade Tito is informed of these matters and I am speaking to you on his behalf.»

Koçi Xoxe nodded his head and looked me in the eye. Perhaps he was thinking to himself: «Now you're in for it!» Meanwhile Zlatić began:

«The Central Committee of the CPY has arrived at the deduction that our relations during this period are not satisfactory. They are not even clear, when they should be close

and firm. A general decline in our relations is being observed, and especially in the economy our relations are quite sluggish. If we take our joint companies there are such clashes between partners that the Arbitration Commission has to intervene all the time. The attitude towards the Yugoslav technicians is so bad that time after time it leads to acts which cause great damage. We have to say that your people, the Albanians, do not benefit from and do not want to accept the aid of Yugoslavia. There are people who are afraid of our collaboration and aid.

«Instead of joint efforts to overcome the obstacles, from certain Albanian comrades there is an unfriendly attitude towards us, they always talk about the obligations which Yugoslavia should fulfil, but their attitude towards the obligations which you Albanians yourselves should fulfil is liberal.

«The Central Committee of the CPY is not satisfied with these relations, which are very bad, and we raise the question: is this not a situation that the enemy desires, that is, is this being done to satisfy the enemy?»

My temper rose and I was about to interrupt, but Zlatić «begged» me to let him finish the communication of the conclusions of the leadership of his party.

«These relations,» continued Zlatić, «have reached this point from your side precisely when the nine communist parties, members of the Information Bureau, have met and decided that the relations among the countries of people's democracy should be strengthened. It is truly astonishing and disturbing to us that our relations with you should be like this at a time when the other countries of the Balkans and Central Europe are linking themselves as closely as possible with Yugoslavia. We regret that the Yugoslav party and government observe that the relations with Hungary and Rumania (not to speak of Bulgaria) are much better than with small Albania, with which we are linked by the war and all the other things.»

Zlatić laid the piece of paper he was holding on the table and took out his handkerchief, giving us a look as if to say:

«Now I have you in the trap.» I don't know why I remembered the meeting of the Bureau at Odriçan when the other Yugoslav, Velimir Stojnić, striking the same pose, launched essentially the same accusations against us. History was repeating itself. Since Zlatić extended the interval of silence, I thought that this was all he had to communicate to us on behalf of Tito, therefore I said to him:

«We listened to your communication and at the proper moment we shall reply to you. But in order to be more clear, I want to ask you: on what does your leadership base the conclusions at which it has arrived? Second, has it analysed the causes which have brought relations between us to this point?»

«I shall tell you all this!» replied Zlatić. «But I have not finished with the deductions of the Central Committee. We have studied the situation thoroughly and we shall speak with our cards on the table. You asked whether we have looked for the causes?! Yes! Our conclusion is that we must seek the cause of the breach in the policy which the Albanian government and its organs pursue towards Yugoslavia. Such a policy, let us say frankly, such an anti-Yugoslav policy, is especially obvious in the economic sector, where your orientation is completely opposed to the line which has been laid down and should exist between our two countries.»

I saw that Koçi Xoxe's face brightened for a moment. Not only was his «sector» left out of the attack, but what was better for him was that the attack was made on the government (the «sector» which, according to Xoxe and the Yugoslavs, pertained to me) and especially on the economy (the «sector» which, according to them, pertained to Nako Spiru).

After this Koçi Xoxe began to take notes on the pieces of paper in front of him. The «friends» were putting forward officially the platform on which he could now operate «legally», in conformity with their strategic plan to overturn the situation in Albania. Meanwhile, Zlatić was presenting the «arguments» and «facts» on which Tito's deductions were based.

«Let us take your draft of the five-year economic plan,» he said. «This draft does not contain the main thing, that is,

it does not mention our credit. This cannot be seen. The draft has an autarkic content and takes no account at all of the economic relations with us. We must assume that this has been disregarded. Let us take the directives which have been given for the five-year plan. Those directives lead your economy towards autarky. Industry, the railway, the port of Durrës, etc., have been planned with inflated capacities. But what is missing? The Albanian economy has not been seen as linked with the economy of Yugoslavia and we have the impression that this orientation does not take into account the agreements with Yugoslavia and the directives of the Central Committees of our parties. We have no objection to the Albanian government's taking measures for the production of bread grain or the development of light industry, but we must not forget that today we have common obligations and we shall fulfil each other's needs on the basis of them. There is no reason for you, too, to begin to make the things that we make.»

While he was speaking, or more correctly, communicating the things which Tito and the Yugoslav leadership had put forward, I managed to control myself with great difficulty. From all that he said the truth was being disclosed more completely and was coming out quite clearly, likewise, I was becoming even more convinced that my suspicions and conclusions about the point we had now reached were more than correct. It is putting it mildly to say that the Yugoslav leadership was behaving perfidiously towards us. Now it was telling us openly that the purpose of the agreements signed about a year earlier was nothing but the integration of our economy into their economy, that is, the transformation of it into a part, into an appendage of the Yugoslav economy and that, if it were «to be developed», it would be developed in the way that interested Yugoslavia and to the extent that Yugoslavia desired.

No, we had never proceeded from such a basis, and indeed, when we suspected this at the first moments we put our doubts out from our minds, because we could not imagine

that a socialist country could try and aim to subjugate another socialist country and put its economy in its clutches.

The preparation on our part of the draft five-year plan of the economic and cultural development of the PR of Albania in itself was in conformity with the line of the gradual but independent development of our country. Sincere and convinced about our line, we had sent the draft plan to the Yugoslavs for them to examine, to suggest their ideas and to give us a final answer about those parts of the plan which we had based on a credit of 20 or 21 billion dinars which they had promised us in the spring of that year. And now it turned out that Tito and company were furious about our line for the independent development of Albania!

This was what the second accusation, that our draft plan was «autarkic», aimed at. But this was the direct, you might say, economic attack. Behind it lay the political aim: a «realistic» plan, «linked with the Yugoslav plan», according to them, would lead not only to the economic, but also to the political union of our two countries. This was not simply logical reasoning. Zlatić had come so full of himself that he communicated this to us quite openly:

«A line, an orientation which is not in accord with our joint agreements exists in Albania,» he said. «According to your orientation we do not move towards the strengthening of our links but towards the weakening of them.

«The CC of the CPY insists that the relations of Yugoslavia with Albania ought to be characterized every day by the idea that our union should be sounder and our friendship should move in the direction of the fraternization and collaboration of our peoples, including Bulgaria, too.

«Because of its backwardness the Albanian economy is not capable of developing independently. The aid of Yugoslavia is necessary. The criterion of this aid is not that you should take everything ready and rely on us in a parasitic way! You will advance by linking yourselves more strongly with us, and our Central Committee thinks that the Yugoslav aid will be greater when we bring about an economic union between our countries!»

The crazy recklessness of the Yugoslav leadership had gone as far as that! Quite openly they demanded from us not collaboration, not mutual fraternal aid, but economic union with Yugoslavia! And the most shameless thing was that they wanted to involve our Central Committee, too, in this vile trafficking, in this haggling, in which not goods, but countries and peoples were bought and sold. At no time had our Central Committee come out with such «directives» or even discussed such a development of affairs. The period when Nako returned from Belgrade after the signing of the Economic Convention immediately came to my mind. I recalled his pessimism, his lack of any confidence in the Convention, and that strange enigma which, it seemed to me, was gnawing at him, but which he never explained to me, either then or later. Again I asked myself: was the question put openly in this spirit to Nako in Belgrade?! Was it precisely here that his enigma lay hidden?! Zlatić's declarations, made so openly, led to this conclusion.

However, it was neither the moment nor the atmosphere to oppose them there and then. In response to two or three interruptions from me about the things Zlatić was saying, he replied in the superior tone of «the master»:

«Comrade Enver, I see that many of these things which I am communicating to you are causing you to react. However, I did not seek today's meeting for a discussion. I have been instructed that today I should only communicate to you these deductions which are not mine, but of our Central Committee. I am communicating them to you in detail. Afterwards study them, analyse them and, whenever you consider it reasonable, you have me at your disposal. We can discuss them and debate them as much as you wish.»

«Certainly, that is how we shall act,» I told him, «but there are some among the things you are saying which we cannot receive with the coolness in which you are communicating them.»

«Please, don't interrupt me,» he said. «In this way, irrespective of whether or not you agree with what I am communicating to you, at least, you will understand the essence

of my communication more correctly and it will be easier for you in the discussions we may hold in the future.»

Koçi interrupted in an undertone:

«These are grave things, Enver. They can't be passed over with just a talk here!»

I, too, agreed to listen calmly while Zlatić hurled colossal «chunks of mud», with the idea that immediately afterwards we would hold a meeting with the comrades and give them the proper reply which the anti-Albanian and anti-Marxist deductions, at which the Yugoslav leadership had arrived, deserved.

Left in «peace», Zlatić continued his communication. In order to imply to us (although matters were quite obvious) that the economic union would be in many planes and the main step for «union» in every other field, Zlatić did not hesitate to tell us through his own mouth the following «conclusions» of Tito and company:

«We must see the economic collaboration from the standpoint not just that we are going to build up the economy together, but we must also be clear that we are going to fight and advance jointly in other fields too, in defence, culture, foreign policy, and so on.

«This is the spirit in which we must educate our peoples, and not as you have proceeded up till now. Both your autarkic plan and your general orientation of cultural development foster in the people the idea of shutting yourselves away in isolation. However, if we foster in the people the sentiments of a kind of anti-internationalist, or, as you might say, a nationalist independence, we are simply building up opinion against our common bases, that is, against union!»

«Apparently what Nako wrote to me when we were in the Soviet Union was true,» I said to myself as soon as I heard the words of Zlatić about «union». I recalled the short letter which they handed me in Leningrad in which Nako wrote me that, on the eve of our departure for Moscow, Vukmanović-Tempo (who was in Tirana those days) had told Koçi Xoxe: «The union of Yugoslavia with Bulgaria has been achieved in principle. It is not good that Albania should lag

behind.» I immediately asked Koçi about this report of Nako's, but Koçi told me: «This conversation did not take place. I know nothing about it.» I left the matter at that, but now Zlatić, through his own mouth, was officially communicating to us what Tempo had told Koçi behind the scenes. There and then I put two and two together: was Tempo's presence in Tirana at the beginning of July, on the eve of our departure for Moscow, fortuitous?! Not on your life! Neither was the meeting which he had had with Koçi Xoxe and which they had kept secret from me fortuitous. The Titoite secret agency was operating in 1947 just as in 1943!

I threw a quick glance at Koçi Xoxe who was sweating as he tried to note down the dictates of Zlatić. I wanted to ask him: «Why have you kept this idea and plan of the Yugoslavs secret from me? And when I asked you in Lenin-grad, why did you lie to me so shamelessly?» But it was neither the moment nor the atmosphere to address the person sitting beside me. Zlatić continued the «communication» of the Yugoslav leadership about its plans for «union».

The possibility that such profoundly hostile and reactionary conclusions and directives had been arrived at had never crossed my mind. Nevertheless, the «conditions» were agreed on, I had to listen quietly and savour twice over, first in Serbian and then in Albanian (the meeting was conducted through an interpreter), the venom and spleen which Zlatić vented. The idea that we would reply to these monstrosities immediately the opportunity was given us kept me sitting there, so, suppressing my anger, I tried to hear the «communication» through to the end. I thought that the real torture I was suffering would not go on much longer, since Zlatić began to present Tito's idea about the future of the Balkans. According to the Yugoslav leadership, the «economic union» of our countries (including Bulgaria) should be carried out as the first step, and then we would go on to the other steps.

«The 'economic union',» communicated Zlatić, «in fact, will constitute the basis of the future federation. The present-day Yugoslavia is its embryo, the nucleus of the federation.

After this comes the question of phases, but our leadership thinks that this is not a current problem. In practice the 'economic union' is the federation itself. This will ensure the true progress of our countries, which cannot be achieved separately. Being united we will emerge before the world as a minor power!

«On this basis,» continued the representative of the «minor power» in Tirana, «we must present the matter to the people, too. For the time being we must be cautious and speak only about the 'economic union'. On the other aspects we should preserve the formal appearances of independence, retain the respective foreign ministries, etc., but the foundations will be federative. This,» he repeated, «is the opinion that our leadership has arrived at.»

It seemed to me that there was nothing more to be said, but I was hasty. The leadership of the «minor power» had gone into all the details and, convinced that it would encounter reactions, found it necessary to give us besides the «imperial order», some «sincere» explanations and to swear that there was nothing evil in its wicked intentions:

«It is not the intention of our Central Committee,» continued Zlatić, «to exert pressure on you over these problems, but we consider that this is the best way for the rapid development of relations of our joint economies. As to what we shall do later, this is something we shall examine, this will depend on the will of the people, the Party and the Central Committee. This might be taken by some cadres as pressure, but you must explain things to your people. You yourselves must understand that Bulgaria might be able to go it alone, but Albania can never last on its own. You must implant this thoroughly in people's minds.»

«Are you finished?» I asked him.

«No,» he replied in his former tone. «I still have two important matters. The first has to do with the series of new measures which our leadership proposes to apply in our joint relations.

«The Central Committee of the CPY thinks that the existing organizational forms in the joint economy are inadequate

and, if they remain as they are today, will be a real obstacle to the development of matters in the way I mentioned above.»

Continuing, he issued the concrete proposals of the Yugoslav leadership which, in essence, had to do with the total integration of our economy into the Yugoslav economy. Among them two impressed me particularly:

«The joint planning which we will do in the economy must be applied rigorously and it must not occur that someone else gives advice about a completed project or that projects are made upon projects!»

«Can you explain more clearly,» I asked, «so that we understand what your leadership is referring to?!»

Zlatić was silent for a moment and looked at me with controlled anger.

«You must understand what I am referring to,» he said, «and I don't know in which way to take your interruption, Comrade Enver! However, I'm speaking to you openly, of course, as comrades, and you ought not to place us in such difficult positions. The point is that not only our advisers are working here. We gave you our orientation of the five-year plan, and if you had based yourselves on it the plan would not have come out autarkic and unrealistic. I don't know whether you sent Nako Spiru or he went on his own to Moscow, but the fact is that he put his trust in the advice of the Soviets. Our orientation was discarded, the opinion of others was accepted, and you see what sort of a plan Nako brought out.»

«We have discussed and approved that plan in general outline in the Bureau,» I told him, and added, not without a purpose: «It is not Nako's plan, or the Soviets' plan, it is the work of the leadership of our Party.»

«And are you still not convinced that it is wrong, unrealistic, anti-Yugoslav and anti-Albanian?» he exclaimed angrily. «What have we been talking about up till now?»

«We have not been talking,» I said, «we have only listened. We shall talk after we have heard the communication of your leadership to the end and studied it. Up till now we have said nothing.»

«Then why do you interrupt me?! Even here you are indicating that we shall have many things to discuss together.»

«I did not interrupt. I asked simply in order to understand the essence of your proposal better.»

«The essence,» he said indignantly, «is this: if our plans are to be common plans there is no reason why the Soviet advisers should give us advice. Their advice will be unnecessary, irrespective of the fact that they are our close friends...»

«Is this your opinion or that of your leadership?»

«The opinion of our leadership is that there should not be projects upon projects and advice upon advice. What I said was an explanation that I made of the deduction in order to make it clear to you.»

«Clear!» I said.

The second proposal which has stuck in my mind (as I said he issued many of them) had to do with the «necessity» for better organization and strengthening of the Co-ordination Commission.

«This commission,» said Zlatić, «will have a very important role. It will be like an organ which links the Republics, except that in the concrete case its epicentre will be the links and co-ordination between Yugoslavia and Albania.»

«I don't wish to interrupt your speech or to express any opinion about it for the moment,» I said to Zlatić there and then, «but can you explain more clearly to us what role your leadership allocates to this commission?»

«This commission,» replied Zlatić readily, «will be very important, will be, as we were told, a kind of joint economic government, which will ensure the direction of that policy which we proposed earlier.»

«I'm still not clear and must interrupt you again,» I said. «In what relationship does your leadership think this commission will be with the governments of each country?»

Zlatić's face went red, he was silent a moment and then continued:

«I communicated the essentials. The main thing is to establish in principle the best organization of this commission

with important attributes, and then see what to do next. I do not know the details. We did not go into these details which you are asking for.»

«Clear,» I said.

He continued with «proposals» about the budget, saying that «in Yugoslavia nothing has been planned for your plan», that «we propose that the autarkic five-year plan should be rejected», indeed that «the idea of any kind of five-year plan should be rejected», and that «a one-year plan should be built for 1948! We shall assist you with so many millions here, so many millions there, so many trucks, so many tractors, so many consumer goods», etc., etc.

«These,» he said, «were the proposals of our leadership!»

I made ready to say to him what had to be said about this session, but he proved to be «quicker off the mark.»

«I spoke at length,» he said, «but, as you saw, the problems are extremely serious. Now I have something much more important. What I said above has to do with the two sides, with us and with you. Now I have the final deduction of our leadership which pertains only to you. At the beginning Comrade Enver quite rightly asked whether we had studied the causes of the unpleasant situation in our relations and I gave him an answer. But I want to dwell especially on this and to communicate more extensively the opinions of our leadership.

«The leadership of our Party has arrived at the conclusion that in this whole situation your comrade Nako Spiru, in particular, and some of his collaborators, have played an astonishing and destructive role. We base this conclusion, apart from other things, on the following facts: when the working groups at ministerial level discussed the problem of drafting your five-year plan, Nako Spiru, as your main delegate, expressed opposition to the orientation of the comrades Krajger and Perović. In essence, Nako Spiru's opposition finds its reflection in that draft-plan which you have worked out and approved. We think that Nako Spiru has cunningly managed to deceive the comrades of your leadership, or

imposed his opinion upon them, and thus succeeded in having his autarkic project with an anti-Yugoslav spirit approved in general outline by you and sent for us to examine it.»

«You continue to speak about major mistakes and make grave accusations, but only with words or 'facts' without foundation,» I told him. «Please, on what do you base these things you are saying?! Second, I must say right now that you are putting a great deal on Nako Spiru. It turns out from your words that he has allegedly directed all of us, the Political Bureau and our Central Committee! This cannot hold water from any standpoint.»

«In principle you might be right,» Zlatić tried to get over the difficulty «cooly», «but sometimes it happens that even a single person deceives the whole leadership when great weight is put upon what he says. Unfortunately, this is what Nako Spiru has done with you.»

«What you say is astonishing,» I replied. «On what do you base this?»

«Nako Spiru,» began Zlatić, «has deceived you in connection with the so-called 21 billion dinars which, according to him, our side has agreed to accord you as a credit for the five-year plan. Our comrades have not made this promise. Nothing of this figures in our budget. Our idea is a smaller amount, because such are our possibilities.»

«How is it possible?» I asked. «This figure was not stated yesterday or one month ago. We were told about those 21 billion as early as May this year. The sum has been referred to many times, but only today we are hearing that this is not the real figure. How was it that you raised no objection earlier?»

«I'm telling you what I have been instructed to communicate. Nako Spiru has fabricated this figure.»

«That is not so,» I told him. «When this figure was given us in May, Nako Spiru was in Moscow. The figure was given to our comrades who were in Belgrade.»

«You should not defend Nako Spiru!» Zlatić told me and added with obvious cynicism: «I have other facts about him. From a whole mass of facts it turns out that Nako Spiru has

kindled the flames of anti-Yugoslavism in Albania. He has wanted to ruin not only the relations between us, but also our relations with the Soviet Union and with Comrade Stalin.»

There was no end to the dirt that he heaped upon Nako Spiru. He mentioned the railway, the hydro-power station of Selita, the oil, the olive groves, our obligations towards the peasantry, etc., etc., and everywhere portrayed Nako as the person who, with a blazing torch, was setting Albania aflame and, indeed, this fire had become so great that the smoke had reached Belgrade and disturbed Tito.

«Others, too, have acted and are acting in this spirit and under the influence of Nako Spiru and we can say that the line of anti-Yugoslavism has already crystallized among you. This must be stopped for the common good.»

«I repeat that today we shall only listen,» I said, «but just one thing I must tell you. To approve or not to approve one, ten, or twenty orientations, conclusions, and so on, of your party can never be called either pro- or anti-Yugoslavism. Anti-Yugoslavism must not be confounded with the fair objections we have had. None of us, not even Nako Spiru, has ever proceeded from the idea that we should harm Yugoslavia. These things that you communicated to us are grave and we do not accept them. Please present to us the arguments on which you base this accusation of 'anti-Yugoslavism'.»

«I shall present them to you,» he said, «at the proper time and in detail. But the main one is that those things which I mentioned speak of anti-Yugoslavism.»

He paused for a minute and added:

«We have formed the conviction that Nako Spiru is carrying out this anti-Yugoslav and anti-Albanian activity as an agent of imperialism! He is working for the foreign secret services against our socialist countries.»

These last words of Zlatić struck me like a thunderbolt, although this occurred under a threatening sky that promised nothing but thunder and lightning.

«What is this you are saying, Comrade Zlatić? On what

do you base such grave accusations against Comrade Nako Spiru?!» I demanded.

«I'm communicating the deductions of our leadership,» he repeated. «And to close this whole history, Comrade Tito instructed me that you should investigate these matters thoroughly, especially the question of Nako Spiru. That is where the evil begins and that is where the cure should start. Such things occur in the revolution. And it should not be forgotten that he has not been operating alone. Even in the Bureau, in the main leadership of your Party, he has had and still has comrades who have backed and supported him. All these things should be looked into thoroughly. We tell you these things as brothers who love you and follow your situation and the situation of the dear Albanian people with concern. Now I have finished.»

Koçi Xoxe had put his hands to his head, although with the manner in which he expressed his «great shock» he made himself quite ridiculous. He was like a tragi-comic clown.

«We listened to your communication,» I said curtly and with a calm that dumbfounded Zlatić. «It is all exceptionally grave and we shall give your leadership our reply at the appropriate time. Today I've only one request: on account of the important and delicate character of the problems which you raised, please let us have the communication of your leadership in writing.»

«In writing?» exclaimed Zlatić. «Why is that necessary? I spoke very plainly. If you like I shall repeat the whole or the parts of it on which you are unclear.»

«No! For us, I'm speaking in the plural because I believe that Koçi, too, is of the same opinion as I, everything is clear. However, we want your communication in writing, so that later, either in our leadership or in your leadership, it won't come round to 'we said it like this, but it was understood like that', 'here Comrade Zlatić is at fault', or 'there the comrade interpreter'.»

«Don't concern yourself about me,» said he «I shall take all the responsibility for everything!»

«Nevertheless, I make this request to your leadership as General Secretary of the Communist Party of Albania. You, as an intermediary, must fulfil or transmit this request.»

«In that case we must consider this request!» Zlatić «retreated». «But this cannot be done today. I shall formulate in writing what I told you, send it to the leadership in Belgrade to see and then let them decide. I simply communicate.»

In general outline, this was the content of the «conclusions» of the leadership of the CPY, which was presented to us in November 1947 and which, in the history of our Party, is known as «Tito's second accusation against the Communist Party of Albania».

Zlatić got up to go, but left amongst us all the filth that he had poured out. As he was leaving I repeated once again that we expected everything he told us in writing and after receiving this we would put the «deductions» of the Yugoslav leadership before the leadership of our Party and would present our opinion about them.

The fact is, however, that the communication in writing from Belgrade did not come (Tito knew where and why to leave documents), but the worst of it was that at those moments, indeed for months on end, we did not give Tito and company the reply they deserved over their profoundly hostile anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian accusations.

Why and how this came about I shall relate below. Here I want only to point out that Tito's accusation, from beginning to end, represented one of the most vile and detestable acts which could ever have been devised by renegades from Marxism-Leninism. Later, especially at the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in September 1948, at the 1st Congress of the CPA in November 1948, and elsewhere, we were to analyse the Titoite accusation, like everything else, in detail and with maturity, and in the light of subsequent events we were to bring out in the open its hostile anti-Albanian essence and aims.

Without going into detailed arguments, I consider it necessary to point out briefly our conclusion about this accusation:

The main purpose of it was to make our country the seventh republic of Yugoslavia, to make it subject to the orders of Belgrade, to turn it into a colony of Yugoslavia in which our independence would be formal, covered up and disguised with the formulas of bourgeois pseudo-independence. The aim of the accusation was to separate Albania from the socialist camp, to alienate it from the Soviet Union, and to drag our Party onto an anti-Marxist course. For the Yugoslav Trotskyites Albania was to be that small state of the socialist camp in which they would conduct their first experiment to put into practice their line of betraying socialism. They had been working in this direction for a long time, but the resistance of our Party had not been quelled and was very far from being quelled. Our Party had great intrinsic strength, therefore the Yugoslav leaders had to work to sap this strength.

In order to achieve this purpose, first of all, they thought they should conquer the will of our Central Committee and the General Secretary of the Party, in whom they saw a great obstacle. The base accusations of the Trotskyite Yugoslav leadership addressed to the Central Committee of our Party, were aimed against me rather than against Nako Spiru, because as General Secretary of the Party I emerged as the person mainly responsible for «the mistaken policy» of the Central Committee. They were well acquainted with the situation in the Political Bureau and in the Central Committee of our Party, knew about the differences which existed between members of the Bureau, especially between Nako and Koçi, as well as about the situation created between me and Koçi. They knew, also, that Nako's views in connection with our relations with Yugoslavia, on all the points which were right, were in accord with my views. They knew very well that Nako did nothing in this direction without consulting me and receiving my approval. Thus, the Yugoslavs had based their calculations on the situation which existed in our Political Bureau, a situation which was due, first of all, to their vile intrigues.

Here lies the reason, also, why they demanded that Xoxe,

too, should take part in the meeting where Zlatić delivered his communication. Xoxe knew he had the support of the Yugoslavs but now he was told: «Now we have laid the cards on the table in front of Enver Hoxha and the day has come for you to act!» And Koçi Xoxe, one of the most sinister and notorious figures in the history of our Party, would now wreak vengeance. He was to play the primary anti-Albanian and anti-party role in putting the Titoites' plan into practice.

Very soon a whole mass of facts, clashes and attacks were to make me even more convinced who Koçi Xoxe was, in whose favour and from what position he worked.

The vengeance of the Yugoslav Agents

It was the time when the whole Party and its leadership, in the first place the Political Bureau, had to analyse the Yugoslav accusations dispassionately and with adherence to principle, that is, first to bring out their injustice and falsity, and then to discover the true motives and aims from which the chiefs in Belgrade were proceeding. With undaunted revolutionary spirit, but with well-considered and cautious tactics, we had to refute the accusations one by one, accusations which in essence were nothing but the links of a single chain, the chain of the new enslavement which was threatening us.

It could not be put off, the work had to begin immediately in our Political Bureau. But even before the Bureau met I knew that our advance would be very difficult, indeed, a grave situation might be created for us and we could get into a hopeless position.

The proper unity of thought and action was still lacking in the Bureau and this was expressed mostly in the endless quarrels between Koçi and Nako. It is of no value to mention here their endless series of quarrels over major and minor issues, but I want to say that in this whole process which

had steadily built up, I had formed the opinion that Nako Spiru, regardless of his great shortcomings and weaknesses, had managed to take a more correct and principled stand than Koçi Xoxe. Above all, Nako was much more active than Koçi in work, took a vigorous part in the discussion and following up of problems, reported to me frequently, and knew how to grasp the most important aspects. In two fields or aspects, in particular, Nako proved to be extremely active and open with me: in the field of the economy and in the field of «criticism» towards others, especially of sectors covered by Koçi Xoxe and people who were known to be «close» to Koçi.

In regard to discussions of economic matters (and here our relations with the Yugoslavs occupied a large place), I listened to Nako, advised him, gave him directives, and in general, our opinions were in accord. In regard to the other field, that of the criticisms of Koçi's «sector», here more than anywhere else I saw Nako's old disease: unhealthy ambition, attacks from personal positions, and a tendency to underrate or push Koçi Xoxe aside. Without underrating Koçi's endless defects, the truth is that I did not support or take account of Nako's «criticisms» of Koçi and I did the same in regard to Koçi's «criticisms» of Nako. It was obvious that each of them was ready to throw out the other. Koçi Xoxe, for his part, was puffed up and haughty, and always remained a «locked door» for me and the Bureau. He did not raise important problems, even about the sectors that he covered as organizational secretary and minister of internal affairs, kept these things from us, because they were «secret», and in the Bureau mostly maintained the pose of arbiter who listens, observes and takes notes.

In fact he was not at all so «withdrawn» or «inactive» as he seemed. Indeed, he worked a great deal, but behind our backs, in obscurity, in the secrecy of the ministry of internal affairs and the «sector» of cadres.

He displayed «activity» in the Bureau only when it came to criticizing some aspect which had to do with the sectors

which Nako covered, and displayed even greater «activity» when he was alone with me or when he took me aside «to tell you something which has been reported to me through my channels about that Nako».

I cannot say that at that period I had come to realize fully that Koçi Xoxe was an agent of the Yugoslavs. I was well-aware (and everybody knew this) that he was very close to the Yugoslavs, absorbed everything they said and applied it blindly, was inclined to support any crazy act of the Yugoslavs, and we knew and saw that for the Yugoslavs he was their favourite, the closest to them, but we thought that this came about since Koçi pleased them by being obedient to their commands and approving everything they said. We knew, and I knew especially, of Nako's continual frictions with the Yugoslavs, of his permanent dissatisfaction with the activities of Tito's emissaries, but in essence, I found Nako's observations and criticisms of the «friends» generally correct and principled. I myself had the same criticisms of the Yugoslavs and had long arrived at the opinion that they were not on the right road.

Meanwhile Koçi and Nako had each worked on and won over their own «supporters» and «backers» even in the ranks of the Bureau. Pandi Kristo and Kristo Themelko were always on Koçi's side, while on Nako's side were three elements who, after the enlargement we made to the Bureau in the summer of 1946, were not admitted as members or even as candidates, but as «three comrades close to the Bureau». These were Liri Belishova, Mehmet Shehu and Fadil Paçrami. Hysni Kapo and Gogo Nushi were two of the most balanced and serious among the new comrades who were co-opted to the Bureau in the summer of 1946 and they did not fall into the traps of either opposing side, but judged and spoke with maturity about the problems which were presented. As for Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova, just as previously, they did not play any particular role and mostly maintained a liberal, conciliatory stand. They could go over to either side, but mostly preferred to be neither with Nako nor with Koçi, and indeed, as they themselves said

at the 8th and 11th Plenums of the CC, «We were useless in the Bureau.» With this they meant that they had been outside these «conflicts» and «backstage manoeuvres».

In general outline, this was the composition and situation in our Political Bureau at those moments when we should have acted as a united body, like a steel fist to cope with the danger which was threatening us. Obviously, our fist could not be united and it was difficult for it to strike where it should with the necessary force. However, I placed great hope in something essential: true, I thought, there are quarrels and feuds between comrades over different problems, but now that our Party and country are facing grave accusations which come from abroad they ought to find the strength to put aside their personal antipathies and unite in the battle that awaits us. In the heat of this battle we will strengthen the desired unity.

In essence this judgement was more than correct, but the foundations on which I had built it were wrong. As I said, I did not know that for Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, on the one hand, and Nako Spiru, on the other hand, the question was not simply one of spite or «personal antipathy» but one of their role as secret agents. They were long-standing agents of Belgrade. In the accusations they made against us, Tito and company had taken good account of this factor, which we did not know or recognize. They were aware of the differences in the Bureau, because they themselves had implanted and fostered them and used them as the main weapon which would give them success in their attack on the line of our Party. The tactics used by the Yugoslavs this time told Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo openly, «Your struggle against Nako and the Commander is well-founded, the enemy has a finger in this. Nako Spiru is playing a strange role, Enver Hoxha supports him a hundred per cent, so now the road is open to you, go on the attack.» In fact, Nako had gone half-way to a turn for the better, kept close to me, consulted me more frequently, did not bow to the directives of the Yugoslavs, based himself on the Soviets, in which he was right and I supported him.

In this battle which he was about to begin Koçi Xoxe

saw a reliable course towards the realization of his old dream. For him Nako Spiru was finished. I remained the only obstacle, but as the «supporter» of Nako, according to him and the Yugoslavs, I had to suffer the same fate. In this way the fire would quickly burst out in our Political Bureau.

Two or three days after Zlatić's accusations, Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo came to «visit» me at home. As soon as they came in I understood that they had discussed matters thoroughly with each other. Without even the usual greetings, they began their abuse and accusations.

«It's a disgrace! It's a disgrace for us that we have allowed such an element to exist and manoeuvre so long at the head of the Party!» «complained» Pandi.

«We have been soft and have overrated him. He blinded us with figures and his constant criticism,» added Xoxe.

It was evident that indirectly all these things were aimed at me. The situation became tense. More or less the conversation, allegedly «between comrades», was being turned by them into a kind of meeting of the Bureau, although we were only three and the others were not summoned. They insisted that we should summon Nako alone «to inform him and demand an accounting».

«Very well,» I told them, «but we should not be hasty. First of all, we must collect our arguments, discuss the matter with the comrades, and put forward Zlatić's accusations in the Bureau.»

«With which comrades?» Koçi asked me. «With those of the Bureau? I disagree, Comrade Commander. The accusation does not include Nako alone, but Nako's whole clan.»

«The accusation does not include only Nako, or only his 'clan', but is a grave accusation of the whole line of the Party and its leadership. In no way are we permitted to leave the Political Bureau out of this,» I told them. «First, all the problems which were raised must be analysed and examined. Then, the question of Nako will be cleared up there, too.»

«I'm totally opposed!» objected Koçi Xoxe wrathfully. «Did you see how Comrade Zlatić put it: 'The evil lies in the question of Nako Spiru and the analysis should begin there'?

Enough of Nako Spiru's doing what he pleases. Now we shall take him to pieces.»

«Comrades!» I said very worried. «We know your quarrels and the unpleasant scenes which have occurred not infrequently. But now I think that the problems placed before us require that we put grudges aside and reflect on what are the main things. We must reply with arguments as to whether our line and orientation in general, and towards Yugoslavia in particular, has been right or wrong.»

«All the evil starts from Nako and the supporters of Nako. We must clean them out. This is how the analysis should start!» insisted Koçi Xoxe.

With pain and grief I finally convinced myself that we were not going to act in unity in the struggle ahead of us. Moreover, Koçi and Pandi did not speak simply as an «opposition» to Nako Spiru, but precisely as if they were delegates of the Yugoslavs. And, in fact, that is what they were. Although not «present», the Yugoslav leadership, through its agents, was to manipulate the whole «analyses» which we were commencing.

We continued the debate for a long time and when they saw my unshakeable opposition, Xoxe threw off the mantle of «gentility» and hurled the next bomb:

«Comrade Commander, let us make things clear at last. Don't forget that we have always commented that 'you listen a great deal to what Nako says'! Don't forget that you, of course urged by Nako, have insisted on the autarkic plan! Do you still want to continue the old line? You astound us with this insistence! After all, we have no reason to spend much time listening to the enemies in the Bureau. Let us summon the main one of them and the others will fall after him.»

They both continued to raise «arguments» and exert all sorts of pressure. I felt that for these two the Yugoslav accusation was no longer a question of the Bureau and analysis. Everything had been worked out and pre-determined by Belgrade and the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana. After a great deal of debate we reached agreement on a «compromise»: Nako

would not be summoned directly to the Bureau and all the accusations made against him there, but initially we would inform him about what Zlatić communicated to us and then begin the discussion. Now that I was convinced that Koçi and Pandi would be in favour of the Yugoslav thesis, the stand of Nako Spiru, in particular, assumed great importance.

About the middle of November we summoned him (Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and I were present) and informed him about Zlatić's accusation in connection with «anti-Yugoslavism», about «his role in the economy», but without mentioning the accusation that he was «an agent of imperialism». Nako listened without a tremour, quietly lit a cigarette (usually he lit one cigarette off the other) and when we had finished, to my astonishment, after blowing out a cloud of smoke, he said:

«Is that so? And this has shocked you?! Give me two weeks and I'll make the whole of Albania pro-Yugoslav!»

In the 7 or 8 years that I had known him I had been angered and disappointed by him so many times (just as I had been rejoiced by his good aspects), so many times, besides words of praise, I had given him the sternest criticism, but the shock and disappointment which I suffered from this «wisecrack» was the most powerful of all.

«How dare you speak like this?» I said, unable to control myself. «What is this Albania that, according to you, in two weeks you can make 'pro-Yugoslav' or 'anti-Yugoslav'?! Who do you think you are that you are able to work such miracles?!»

He stopped dumbfounded. Koçi and Pandi smiled with satisfaction and expected the quarrel to burst out.

«Excuse me!» said Nako, pulling himself together. «Perhaps I was wrong. But what can I say? There has been nothing anti-Yugoslav in my work. I have acted according to the line of the Party in my sectors. It has never been my aim to damage the relations with the Yugoslav comrades, but I have only made comments and criticisms about those things which have not seemed to me to be right. You have not opposed me.»

«Not opposed you!» exclaimed Koçi Xoxe. «We have quarrelled constantly!»

«I am not referring to our quarrels,» said Nako coolly, and fixed his eyes on Koçi Xoxe's face. «They have been something else. The accusations raised here are quite different!»

«That's what they have been about,» said Koçi angrily. «I saw what you were like, that's why I opposed you.»

«If we are talking about why you opposed me and why I opposed you, this warrants a whole analysis,» said Nako quietly with a look which left Koçi Xoxe pale and confused. «Comrade Enver has asked for this several times.»

«No, no, Nako, let us take up what was said to us,» replied Koçi Xoxe in a docile, frightened, almost begging tone. For a moment the two fighting cocks lowered their feathers.

«What is being said does not pertain to me alone,» replied Nako.

«Comrade Zlatić said it did and that is why we summoned you to inform you and help you,» said Koçi Xoxe as though «casually».

«The backing off» of the two sides, especially of Koçi Xoxe who just a few moments before was brandishing his sword, was showing once again, but with much greater force, that between Koçi and Nako there was a secret, a delict, an enigma (for me) which terrified, indeed completely disarmed them both. For years I had known that there was something of the sort, that the beginning of the tangle lay there, but they were so terrified of it that they immediately retreated and reached a momentary «accord» in order to continue their everlasting quarrels. Perhaps the new situation created would bring everything to light at last.

We went on in this way for some hours and, eventually, it was agreed that we would raise the problem in the Bureau on the following day. Nako was instructed that there he must present his ideas and arguments on the question of the plan calmly and without passion or bias, just as we others would

do. Thus it seemed to me that things were on the right course. I was convinced that Nako would know now to defend the correct line we had followed, I would support him and, as a result, the Bureau would be orientated correctly and judge with maturity.

However, such a procedure was not in the interests of Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and company. If the analysis of the main problems were to begin they might lose the day. Therefore, right from the beginning of the meeting of the Bureau, immediately after I presented the main outlines of the Yugoslav accusations, Koçi Xoxe got up and said:

«The Commander forgot one thing! Nako Spiru is not accused of distorting the orientation of the economy out of ignorance. No, Nako Spiru has done this as an agent of imperialism! This is the direction in which we must make our analysis and hear what he has to say.»

Nako went deathly white. For the first time I saw him, an impulsive type who could not keep his hands still as he was, go rigid, as though frozen to the spot. Koçi's words took me by surprise, too, and I felt myself hard pressed, because we had decided that for the time being we would not mention the Yugoslavs' accusation that Nako was an agent of imperialism.

«The problem is extremely serious,» said Nako, «extremely serious! It is an accusation rather than a problem. The whole thing is grave and quite unexpected. However, I shall have my say.»

«Let us hear you,» said Koçi.

«No,» said Nako, «I shall prepare myself and then reply.»

«What will you prepare?» asked Pandi menacingly. «Bring out here all those things you have been preparing for years and let us, the Bureau, judge them.»

«I want at least five days to prepare myself,» insisted Nako.

«Why do you want to prepare yourself? To cover your tracks? But we are not going to allow you to cover them up, because it has been hard enough to uncover them. Of course,

it's the merit of the Yugoslav comrades that your dirty linen has been brought to light,» Koçi raved. «As far as I'm concerned, in all conscience (for some time, in order to appear to have some theoretical training, he had started to use foreign words, of course, so mispronounced in his own peculiar way that he made himself quite ridiculous. However, the atmosphere was too grave to permit even the flicker of a smile), as far as I'm concerned,» continued Koçi, «this is what you have been for a long time. But what could I do with the others who listened to you as if you were the Apostle Paul! The General Secretary will see for himself where his responsibilities and our responsibilities lie in your anti-Yugoslavism... In short,» concluded Xoxe, «I propose to this Bureau that we examine the 'question of Nako Spiru' not later than 8 o'clock tomorrow evening. Nako's request for a postponement is a trap and an attempt to throw dust in our eyes and to create grave situations for us.»

«I beg the comrades,» said Nako again, «to reflect and to understand me. Without preparation I am not in a position to speak as I should.»

«Comrade Koçi,» I intervened. «Don't be hasty either in your words or in your 'ultimatums' about the hours when the Bureau should meet. We are here and will decide in the fairest way. Here you threw on the table one of the accusations of the Yugoslav leadership which Zlatić transmitted to us and only that one linked with Nako, while Zlatić presented to us the conclusions of Tito and his comrades about our whole line, therefore, that is the point from which the analysis and discussion of the Bureau should begin, and all the comrades of the Bureau should reflect and prepare themselves for this. Naturally, Nako must reflect more deeply and prepare himself more, but,» I turned to Nako, «you don't need five days.»

A silence fell and then Nako Spiru raised his head and asked:

«Have you informed the Soviet Legation about this analysis?»

«What has this to do with the Soviet Legation?» shouted

Koçi Xoxe jumping up. «What are you getting at? We are a party, we are the leadership, we don't take our line from the Soviet Legation.»

«No», said Nako, his face pale. «I do not say that the line should be taken either from the Soviet Legation or from the Yugoslav Legation, but just that they should be consulted.»

«Nako,» I intervened, «we still have not made our analysis and consulted as a Bureau...»

«We know with whom we consult!» said Koçi. «And you are not going to teach us! We've had enough of you doing as you like. Now you must render account. You must render it down to the last detail.»

He was silent for a moment and then as though he had made a great discovery he turned to us:

«I think we should thoroughly examine the statement of this element, 'Have you consulted with the Soviet Legation?'. In connection with the analysis which we are making many things are being concealed. According to what he said, Nako thinks that if we inform the Soviet Legation it might take Nako under its protection and tell us, 'Don't do anything to him'. Let us assume that we would do what those of the Soviet Legation tell us. What would result? Two great parties, two sister parties would be alienated — the glorious Yugoslav party and the VKP¹. That is what Nako Spiru wants to lead us to with his villainous cunning!» shouted Koçi, «There you see his anti-Sovietism, too!»

«What's that?» asked Nako in a low voice, but also with a certain irony. «So you make me out anti-Soviet, too?»

«Certainly I do. Anti-Yugoslav, anti-Soviet, anti-Albanian and whatever else you like. That's what you are. Render account!» roared Koçi while Pandi Kristo nodded his approval of the «political» deductions of the minister of internal affairs.

I saw that matters were very far advanced and it would be difficult to stand up to them correctly. The conspiratorial

¹ VKP(b) — The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (b) (initials in Russian).

mind of Koçi Xoxe was ready to hatch up any intrigue and to make any imaginary deed real.

He thought that the time had come when neither the Bureau nor the Secretary could take decisions any longer. The «General» was waving to big stick. We decided to continue the meeting at 8 o'clock in the evening on the next day.

Before I closed the meeting I added:

«In the coming meeting I shall not permit anyone to speak in this tone and we must be clear that we shall make an analysis of the line of our work and in this context we shall also discuss what Comrade Nako is responsible for and to what extent, but not only in connection with the accusation that Zlatić made and which Koçi raised here against the person of Nako.»

When the meeting was over, I approached Koçi and said to him:

«You attacked him very harshly. You were hasty. The question should have been put forward and judged more calmly and dispassionately.»

«Oh, Enver, we are trying to make things clear to the others... the enemies, and we can't make things clear to ourselves! All this time I've been telling you: you are supporting Nako Spiru too much. I beg you, don't support him any more!»

«I'm not supporting Nako,» I said. «I support that which seems to me right.»

And so we parted to meet again the following day or, more precisely, in the evening, because the morning of November 20, 1947 had almost arrived.

There could be no talk of going to sleep. I was convinced not only that all the problems were proceeding at headlong pace on the most mistaken and distorted course, but also that simply from the viewpoint of the most elementary rules of the internal life of the Party we were acting incorrectly. However, I thought that now the stand of Nako Spiru had importance. I was convinced that in essence he was not wrong about the problem which was raised, I was convinced that his

collisions with the Yugoslavs in the concrete instance were correct and inevitable collisions. But how and for how long would he stand up to the attack?!

The way he flared up immediately when we told him what the Yugoslavs had put before us in the address of the Party and in his address, in particular, did not please me at all. I did not like the way he was stunned and bemused later, or the way in which he asked for five days for preparation. In essence, I was of the opinion that he should have not five days, but even more to prepare himself if need be, but I did not like the way in which he asked for them, as if begging for mercy. I knew his impulsive temperament which often made him say cutting things. At those grave moments those defects were especially out of place.

About midday Nako Spiru knocked at the door and came in. He was shaken, demoralized and broken from every point of view.

«I wanted to beg you once again,» he said, «you understand my grave situation. Use your influence so that they give me five days' time.»

«Listen Nako,» I told him, «we have gone through the most difficult times and moments together. We have gone through moments when we were facing the enemy and we knew how to reply to him, but we have also gone through moments when we had the enemy amongst us and it was not easy to distinguish and attack him.»

«Even you think that I'm an enemy?» he said his shoulders sagging.

«No, I don't say that, and I never have said it. That is a statement, an accusation which comes from someone else, from another party. You were told it openly. Very well then, do you have to cry about it? No, this does not befit you, does not befit a communist. You must refute it. You must give your ideas, your arguments.»

«That's why I came, give me time to prepare myself!»

«I don't decide that — the Bureau has decided it,» I told him. «Listen Nako, why do you need five days? We're among

comrades, we should say things just as they are. The only help I can give you in this situation,» I said, «is this: speak openly and sincerely. The day has come, Nako, to lay on the table everything that has been kept secret, covered up for years. The moment has come when, not only you, but all of us must answer those questions which I have continually raised: what is this situation, why has it come about, is it right, where do the causes lie, what must be done?! Now you are placed in the 'dock'. But the criticisms don't rest only on you. They go wider and deeper. Answer what you are charged with with coolness and courage, qualities which I believe are not lacking in you. In this way we, the Party, the Central Committee, will be able to judge correctly and give the proper answer to the accusations.»

«I need time to prepare myself, to remember everything and put it in order.»

«This does not depend on me and you were at the meeting yourself,» I told him. «However, everything won't be over this evening. Let us begin from the analysis and then things will be cleared up one after the other. And there let it come out whether it is you, I, Koçi or anyone else who is right or wrong. That's all I have to say to you.»

«I shall try,» he said and went away.

Nako's strong stand, the complete opening of the records, the bringing to light of everything, I thought, would possibly be one of the main and surest ways to escape from that grave situation. And here the question was not about Nako, myself or any other individual. From our stand, from the open and sincere analysis of things, everything would come to light. I thought that in this way the truth would emerge clearly and the Party and the people would escape from the danger which was threatening them...

However, precisely when I thought that the time had come and the conditions were ripe for us to do what should have been done long ago, to do what they did not allow me to do in 1946, the door banged open and Koçi Xoxe came in:

«I told you so,» he shouted, «he's an enemy, a scoundrel.

He killed himself and died like a dog. Now he has proved that he's been an enemy and worse than an enemy!»

«Who?» I asked. «What are you talking about?»

«Nako Spiru has killed himself. He ended up as he deserved!»

He spoke in an angry tone in which it was not difficult to distinguish a deep, inner gloating. Thus, the only obstacle to the conspirators' directing their attack against me had been removed from the scene.

For Koçi this meant a big stride forward towards his final aim. Nako Spiru's suicide shook me deeply and I had reason for this. If he considered himself innocent he had no reason to commit suicide. He had the main responsibility for the economic problems and if he were convinced that the Yugoslavs' line in the economy was not correct, then he should have risen to defend our line which he himself considered correct and which he knew very well also had my full support and backing. This he did not do. Was this fear or something else? Moreover his statement, «Give me two weeks and I'll make the whole of Albania pro-Yugoslav,» made me reflect deeply. Examined dispassionately this «expression» made me wonder whether, in the criticisms he had made up till now (and which in themselves were correct) Nako had proceeded from an anti-Yugoslav basis. The doubt arose in my mind whether he had seized on the mistakes and the distorted stands of the Yugoslavs, using them for deliberate purposes and aims not in the Party spirit.

Nako Spiru would have assisted the Party greatly if he had revealed the manoeuvres of the Titoites behind the scenes and the role of Koçi Xoxe. But together with this he would also have disclosed his own faults and, faced with this dilemma, he did not have the courage. He put his «name» above the interests of the Party and killed himself.

Only a few months were to pass and the truth was to be made completely clear. Nako Spiru had opposed the Yugoslavs because they left their man of Berat in the lurch and preferred Koçi Xoxe to him. Then Nako turned his eyes in

another direction, to a greater «power» than the Yugoslav power. He linked himself with the Soviets. We regarded these contacts of his as something more than correct and in order, in favour of our cause and socialism, but Nako did not see them in this way. He had not linked himself with them simply out of the feeling of respect and affection. He saw his rapprochement with the Soviets as a means, as a way to impose himself on others, especially on Koçi, with the aim of displacing him and taking his position. What role the Soviets (I'm speaking of the officials of the Soviet legation in Tirana and the low or medium rank apparatchiki in Moscow whom Nako had met) played in nurturing Nako's ambitions, I do not know. I know only that the Soviet advisers and specialists in Tirana, in particular, liked and quite openly preferred Nako Spiru and listened to his opinion, just as he listened to theirs. The fact is, however, that from the side of the Soviet comrades we never had any intervention to favour Nako Spiru. After his suicide one of the comrades of the Soviet embassy, called Gagarinov, informed us orally that Nako Spiru had sent them a letter in which he said that, «after the grave accusations which the Yugoslav leadership has made against me I am obliged to kill myself. . .» That was all we were told. The Soviet advisers, and especially the main Soviet adviser for the economy, Troitsky, shed tears over the loss of Nako and did not hide their grief over him, but they did not take any action before this act or to prevent his act. I believe that they knew nothing about what was going on, or if one of the people of Nako's circle informed them, the Soviets did not consider it in order to involve themselves in this question. Perhaps it was not without purpose that Nako said in the Bureau, «Have you consulted with the Soviet legation over this analysis?» and for this reason sought five days' time to prepare himself, or to put it better, to send a call to Moscow, «S.O.S! Save me!»

However, it was to be proved subsequently that the other side, the Yugoslavs, acted urgently and it was they who drove Nako Spiru to the base and unpardonable act he committed. Warned by Koçi Xoxe that Nako Spiru might reveal

in the Bureau all the threads of the plot that had begun in Berat and continued to operate, the Yugoslavs confronted Nako with the incriminating documents in which he expressed himself against our Party and me. Finding himself in that grave situation, Nako, judging like a petty bourgeois, thought that he would lose my support, too, and considered himself in a hopeless position.

His end finally sealed off the only remaining road for us to get out of the situation which the Yugoslavs had created for us. He took with him in his grave the secret of the plot hatched up. At the same time the end of Nako was the most powerful weapon which the Yugoslavs and their agents, Koçi Xoxe and company, were now to use in order to realize their aims. The way was open for them to concentrate the attack on me.

To make more than clear what the Yugoslavs were aiming at, on the day following Nako Spiru's suicide, Savo Zlatić said to Tuk Jakova:

«Great attention should be paid to what is happening in your Party, because similar things have occurred in the past in our Party, too. The former general secretary of our Party, Gorkić, turned out to be a traitor...»

All this was aimed directly against me. Savo Zlatić was savouring the first fruits of his victory.

The agents of Belgrade, Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and others, took up the banner and began the most vicious attack against the Party, against its line and against me. The process of endless «meetings» and «analyses» began in the Bureau in which Koçi Xoxe now openly predominated and directed.

The Yugoslavs' criticisms were accepted as correct. Not only that, but the efforts and correct views on my part, on Nako's and other comrades', were all turned against us and exploited to point out our lack of faith in «the correct line of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia». The theses for the re-examination of the Berat Plenum, my reply to Savo Zlatić over the Yugoslavs' first criticism, all these things were studied and used to show that

distrust towards Yugoslavia had long existed in me and in Nako. Some acts of the youth on the railway and other projects were condemned as hostile acts against the Yugoslavs and against the line of our Party and the blame was laid mostly on Nako. All the reports of our organs of control and of the comrades of the Party on the railway and elsewhere were rejected without the slightest hesitation. Things which proved the accuracy of the correct views of our people were gathered and examined in detail in order to «prove» the opposite, in the direction which interested the Yugoslavs. Nako was classed with the spies and traitors within the Party!

The Party and the Homeland were going through the gravest and most tragic moments. «Work» was going on to present all these matters to the Central Committee of the Party and then to the whole Party and the people.

Precisely at the climax of this grave atmosphere from which to many it seemed there was no way out, we received some news which brought us joy: Georgi Dimitrov, in the name of the sister party and government of Bulgaria, invited a government delegation of the PR of Albania, headed by me, to pay a visit to Bulgaria. The invitation was official, in response to a request we had made earlier and the Yugoslavs and their agents within our ranks were faced with an accomplished fact. Considering the grave moments through which our Party was passing, it can be assumed that this invitation had not been issued without the suggestion of Stalin as a counter to the manoeuvres of the Yugoslavs. Nevertheless, their general euphoria and certainty that matters would go as they intended led the Yugoslavs to «retreat»: we postponed our analyses for later and began our preparations to go to Bulgaria.

VII

OUR FIRST VISIT TO THE PR OF BULGARIA

Ranković charges Koçi Xoxe with surveillance over our activity

The invitation of Dimitrov for us to visit the PR of Bulgaria ■ A short stop in Belgrade. Meeting with Tito ■ Ranković calls Koçi Xoxe to a secret meeting. He is charged with surveillance over our activity ■ Emotional welcome in Sofia ■ Official talks ■ Dinner with Georgi Dimitrov. Midnight incident ■ The end of official talks in Kritchim. Georgi Dimitrov: «Keep the Party pure. Let it be revolutionary, proletarian, and everything will go well with you» ■ The journey through Belgrade — Tito in Rumania ■ The return to the Homeland.

Immediately after it emerged from the heroic National Liberation War, the People's Republic of Albania made every effort to establish close links of friendship with the Soviet Union, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and all the other countries of people's democracy of Europe.

The great friendship with all the friendly countries and fraternal peoples which we nurtured and tried to develop, to see it in practice and to strengthen ceaselessly, was founded on the National Liberation War and the blood shed by our peoples in this war against the same enemy. Despite the

great sacrifices which we made (by fighting alone in our own country and liberating it with our own forces, and by fighting beyond our state borders to assist in the liberation of Yugoslavia), we, for our part, had a proper appreciation of the great and decisive contribution of the Red Army as well as of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army and others to this liberation. The others minimized our war and taking advantage of our proper presentation of the question on the Marxist-Leninist line, used this as if «they did everything» and «without them we could not do anything». To them Albania was an infant which had to be bottle-fed, which had to be kept under patriarchal tutelage and the voice of which had no reason to be heard in the concert of the policy which the other countries of people's democracy pursued. As I said, in the first years this spirit of underrating us was felt most in the stands of the Yugoslav leaders, who acted in this way, not only because they were unscrupulous megalomaniacs, but also because they pursued sinister aims towards us. From the others, they wanted only an official «recognition» of Albania on paper, with declarations from afar, but they never wanted this recognition to take concrete form in the all-round mutual links of our country with the other countries of people's democracy, including the Soviet Union. To a certain extent, this anti-Albanian policy of Belgrade yielded results and the fact is that, while the friendly countries of people's democracy recognized us officially in 1945 and 1946; in reality they recognized us from a distance and, even worse, through the «presentation» which Yugoslavia made of us.

Such a spirit and practice were developed and permitted at first, but not by us. Of course, this spirit had its ups and downs, had restraints and angry threats, until the Gordian knot was severed with the sword. But let us not anticipate. It must be said that Yugoslavia and Tito were interested in keeping us isolated. They had certainly manoeuvred and continued to manoeuvre behind the scenes in the direction of Bulgaria, too, and had success up until the moment when we received the invitation of the Bulgarian government and the

Communist Party, in the name of Dimitrov, for our delegation to go to Sofia.

The invitation which Dimitrov sent us was welcomed with great enthusiasm when I put it forward for discussion and approval in the Political Bureau and in the government. In the grave atmosphere of that period it was like a clear day after a stormy night fraught with dangers. I was charged with preparing the accurate formulation of the problems which we would raise and with the other technical problems, the composition of the delegation and informing the ambassadors of the friendly countries.

First, I summoned the Bulgarian ambassador whom I thanked again and informed officially of our acceptance. Only the precise date of our departure remained to be decided jointly.

Then, I summoned the Soviet ambassador and informed him, too. He implied to me that he had been informed by Moscow. I had no doubt about this, indeed, I was of the opinion that such an action could not have been taken without seeking the advice of Stalin. This was a special assurance for us. But we thought that the Yugoslavs, too, would have been informed. However, I summoned the Yugoslav ambassador, too, and informed him. He listened to me, took notes and said that he would immediately inform the government in Belgrade. I saw that the news did not please him and, as far as I could gather, he had not known about it.

«Has the Soviet ambassador been informed about this?» he asked me.

I replied that I had informed the Soviet ambassador. I told him also that we would talk again later when, together with the Bulgarians, we had decided the day of our departure.

«We shall travel through Belgrade and will seek your assistance,» I said in conclusion.

«Of course!» he replied.

Thus, I parted from the Yugoslav ambassador in a «good», «comradely spirit», although I guessed that the Yugoslavs could not be pleased that we were going to interrupt our analyses and

postpone for later the «Albanian question» which they had on the agenda.

We began and ended the preparations and set out for Sofia via Belgrade. I headed the delegation and its main members were Koçi Xoxe, Hysni Kapo, and Kristo Themelko.

I was exceptionally happy to be going to Dimitrov's Bulgaria. Hysni, too, felt this same great joy. From the look of them, Koçi and Kristo Themelko, too, seemed to have the same feeling (but later it was realized that this was not so). This was the third time that I left the Homeland and went with official delegations to friendly and fraternal countries: the first time we went to Tito in Belgrade; the second time to Stalin in Moscow; and now we were going to Dimitrov in Sofia.

The love and sympathy of our people, Party and government for Bulgaria and for its outstanding leader, Dimitrov, were marked. These feelings had their foundations in the long history of friendly traditions and these friendly traditions had been strengthened during the National Liberation War, irrespective of the fact that there had been few links and contacts between us and the Bulgarian partisans. In particular, the mighty figure of Georgi Dimitrov linked us closely in an unquestioned political-ideological unity. The Marxist-Leninist ideology which inspired our parties was the steel bond which united us in all our activities.

In the past, when the Albanian people fought against the ambitions and terror of the Serbs, we were friends with the Bulgarian people and we liked, respected and assisted each other. The patriots and fighters of our National Renaissance found shelter and aid for their struggle in the bosom of the Bulgarian people; Albanian patriotic societies had been created in Sofia and there Albanian books and papers, which were smuggled into Albania, were printed. Our çetas of the time of the Renaissance and during the Balkan Wars had close fighting relations with the insurgent çetas of those parts, carried out joint actions and sheltered one another. Thus, there was a long history of very friendly links between our peoples. Our joint Anti-fascist National Liberation War strengthened

these bonds even more, although, as I said, during the war we did not have direct contacts with the Bulgarian partisans. Only on one occasion, in 1943, Bulgaranov came to Labinot to meet me. We exchanged opinions about the war, but my impression was that the Bulgarians were weak. In fact, the Bulgarian partisan war developed slowly and flared up on a broad scale only when the Red Army entered Bulgaria. In the meeting which we had, Bulgaranov spoke well of the Yugoslavs and likewise, of our Albanian units which operated in the districts of Dibra and Macedonia. He told us that he was delegated by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party to work with the Macedonians, whom he called Bulgarians at that time. I knew that Bulgaranov did not get along well with Vukmanović-Tempo, who led the National Liberation War in Macedonia, but he told me that allegedly he got on well with the Yugoslavs. I pointed out to Bulgaranov that whole territories populated by Albanians had been included in Macedonia, that this was an injustice of the past and that after the anti-fascist National Liberation War the question of nationalities had to be examined according to the Leninist principles.

«Only from this standpoint,» I told him, «will the problems of these zones and nations and nationalities that live in them be solved correctly. Otherwise, the old national oppression, contradictions and conflicts will continue. During the whole period of the war against the same enemy, fascism,» I told Bulgaranov, «the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party of Albania and the Bulgarian Communist Party must work towards developing friendship amongst our peoples. We must enlighten our peoples politically in order to wipe out the bitter remnants of the past and lead them to victory; the peoples who have suffered from the injustices perpetrated by the Great Powers and the chauvinism of Balkan states must win the right to self-determination. This is what we think about the Albanians of those Albanian regions which were annexed to Yugoslavia.»

Seeing that I had opened the way, Bulgaranov, too, began

to speak about the question of Macedonia, which he called part of Bulgaria.

I allowed him to express his opinion and did not enlarge on this question. I knew that the Yugoslavs, for their part, had a tendency to minimize and disparage the war of the Bulgarians. Undoubtedly, one of the main reasons for this was the question of Macedonia.

Apart from this meeting, we had no other contacts with the Bulgarian comrades during the years of the war, but we ceaselessly cultivated the feelings of fraternal internationalist friendship for the Bulgarian people and the Bulgarian Communist Party (which, as I recall, was called the Bulgarian Workers' Party at that time). The personality of Dimitrov, who had won world fame, played a major role in this. The name of the hero of Leipzig, of the General Secretary of the Comintern, was on the lips of all the communists and anti-nazis of the world. After the great classics of Marxism-Leninism, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, we loved, admired and listened to him. Dimitrov was one of Stalin's closest friends and collaborators, therefore our going to Sofia and meeting Dimitrov was a great joy for us.

With these pure, friendly feelings for the friendly allied countries, our delegation set out and arrived in Belgrade on December 12. The welcome which we received at the railway station was extremely cool, but «officially» the Yugoslavs showed themselves more than «correct in protocol»: Kardelj, Ranković, Simić (at that time Foreign Minister), Hebrang (Chairman of the Planning Commission), Tempo and a number of other personalities of lower rank had come out to meet us. As I said, our visit to Bulgaria was taking place at the time when Tito and company had gone on the attack against us, therefore, the turning out at the station of all these «top-level authorities», as Koçi Xoxe called them, was something of a surprise to us. However, everything had its own explanation and the Yugoslavs had carefully calculated the actions they took. In public, the great rifts which had been created in the relations between our parties and countries had still not be-

come apparent and the Yugoslavs were striving to develop their attack in complete secrecy. Indeed, to eliminate any suspicion about this attack, they even made some gesture of «friendship» and «fraternity» towards us such as the turning out of «top-level personalities» at the station. But all these things were done reluctantly and coldly. We knew nothing of diplomatic rules, protocol and formalities, such as ceremonies, etc., and did not even notice these things, but the fact is that, except for a few extremely official words of greeting demanded by protocol, Tito's comrades said not another word to us. However, there was no reason for this coldness to make an impression on us. Likewise, it made no impression on us that they took us to stay in what was virtually a private house (nationalized, of course). They told us it had been the home of Stoyadinović, the Great-Serb fascist reactionary, who, in the time of the Yugoslav monarchy, talked with Ciano about dividing Albania with Mussolini's Italy.

Regardless of the cold reception, the accusations which Zlatić had made and the grave situation that had been created in our country as a result of these accusations, I considered it necessary to utilize the time of our stay in Belgrade for a meeting with Tito, with the aim of talking directly with him about how the truth stood. For this reason, we decided to ask for a meeting with him, even if he did not invite us himself. As allies, we also considered it proper to inform him about the aims of our visit to Bulgaria, to tell him about the importance of the treaty which we expected to sign with fraternal Bulgaria and which we considered as a reinforcement of the treaty which we had with the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Naturally, on this occasion we could also exchange opinions with him about the international situation, but the main thing, if this were possible, was that we wanted to speak openly about our internal matters and the tense relations with them. This was our disposition when we arrived in Belgrade.

At the moment when we were parting from Kardelj and Ranković, after they took us to the gate of the house where we

were to stay, I put to them our request for a possible meeting with Tito.

«Yes,» said Kardelj, cold as a snake. «Comrade Tito himself wants to meet and welcome you, perhaps this evening. We shall inform you at the proper time.»

Not long afterwards they informed us that Tito was awaiting us for a «meeting of welcome».

It is true that we were somewhat «excited» about meeting these «great men», because that is how they presented themselves and that is how they wanted us to consider them. Whether a warm, comradely situation or a tense and frozen atmosphere was created depended on their character and stands. Two days later we were to meet Dimitrov for the first time, were to become acquainted with him and, I must say, that Tito could not compare with the outstanding leader of Bulgaria. They were as different as night from day, and I do not make this judgement from the standpoint of today, but these were my authentic impressions at that time. Tito remained haughty and cold with us, with measured, studied gestures and never allowed himself the mistake of making a gesture or saying any word which showed comradely closeness and warmth. No, nothing of the sort could be seen about him, everything was pre-considered and cold. In 1946, during the first meeting with him, we said that this might be his character, but now we were realizing that the meaning of Tito's coldness had another explanation. He wanted us, even in appearance, to stand at attention before him, as before the patriarch.

On this occasion Tito did not receive us in the Palace of Dedinja, but in a simple house within the city of Belgrade, I think in a street which is called Rumunska. It was a pleasant two-storeyed house of the old style, encircled by a high wall. We entered the hall, where, if I am not mistaken, Tito, Kardelj, Ranković and Djilas welcomed us. Tito was dressed in grey woollen clothing and with shoes of the same colour. He stood as stiff as a ramrod. He simply gave us his hand, while asking after our health, and, when this ceremony

was over, led us into his office which was off to one side. It was a longish room with a window nearly as wide as the room. Near the window was his working desk and in the middle of the room another long table. Apparently, the meetings of the Bureau were held there or Tito used it to summon other people about the work. We were to take our places at the table and, as usual, they would sit on one side and we on the other.

«Please sit down,» said Tito and remained standing himself. I took my seat and my comrades were preparing to take theirs, one after the other, beside me. But Tito intervened and said:

«Comrade Xoxe, you sit here,» and indicated the big chair which stood empty at the head of the table. We were all dumbfounded by this action of Tito's. However, I calmly told Koçi, who was as red as a beetroot:

«Go there where he tells you.»

«No, Comrade Marshal, I can sit here, let Comrade Enver sit there,» Koçi replied to Tito.

«No, no,» said Tito, «come here, you, too, can sit here.»

I quietly told Koçi again to go where he was told. Thus this provocation was closed. We all took our seats. Tito took out his cigarette holder in the form of a pipe, put in a cigarette and lit it and then pushed the packet towards me saying:

«Here, have a cigarette.»

I told him I had given up smoking (this was not true, but I did not want to smoke his cigarettes after what he had done). Then Tito said to me:

«The comrades informed me that you are going to Bulgaria and, of course, you will meet Dimitrov. Are you pleased with the prospect of this visit?!»

I told him briefly about the purpose of our visit to Bulgaria, said that this had been a long-cherished desire, stressed the sympathy and love which the Albanian people had always displayed for Bulgaria, its people, and especially, for the outstanding leader of Bulgaria and the international communist and workers' movement, Georgi Dimitrov. I went on to

say that we expected to hold talks with the Bulgarian comrades about strengthening mutual relations between our parties and countries and in this context we thought we would sign such documents which would reinforce not only the independence of our two countries, but also the relations between the People's Republic of Albania and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Tito listened to me with a frown on his face, his head held high, looking at me with those cold glassy eyes.

When I had finished, Tito turned to Koçi and said with a smile:

«Of course, you have prepared yourselves to benefit from the experience of the Bulgarian Communist Party...»

«We may be given the occasion to do such a thing, too, but we have unlimited possibilities to receive the experience of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at any moment and about everything,» replied Koçi.

From beginning to end Ranković sat without moving a muscle of his face, merely smoking cigarettes with his long white holder.

Then Tito began to speak. Not undeliberately, he virtually ignored everything I had said, where we were going, and what we were going to do. It was clear that with this stand he wanted to show us that it was of no importance at all to him what we were going to do with the Bulgarians. In other words, this meant that they did not like the visit we were about to make, because he concentrated his whole talk on «the strengthening of Albanian-Yugoslav relations», that «these relations have great importance for Albania», that «you Albanians must struggle against shortcomings and mistakes which are noticed in the work of your Party and state apparatuses», in order not to hinder «the great aid given to you by Yugoslavia» which made «sacrifices» for us etc. etc.!

My impression was that Tito granted us this meeting before our departure for Bulgaria to «remind» us that, whether to Sofia or to Moscow or anywhere else, «our road passed

through Belgrade». By talking in this way he «set the limits» for us with the Bulgarians.

I thanked Tito for «his valuable advice», assured him sincerely about the love which we continued to nurture for the friendly and fraternal Yugoslav peoples and, just as I was preparing to start on our problems in which, according to him, we had «mistakes and shortcomings», he stood up.

«We shall have the opportunity when you return from Bulgaria,» he said, and walked out of the room, inviting us to watch a film together.

After the film, from which I can remember nothing at all, they gave us a coffee, or as they say in Gjirokastra, «the-time-to-go coffee». We shook hands and parted. We thought that we would have no other contact with the Yugoslav leaders. But they had proposed to Koçi Xoxe individually and without my knowledge that he should meet with Ranković or Koçi had sought such a meeting himself. Most likely, however, Ranković asked to meet Koçi.

This occurred that evening before we left by train for Bulgaria. We were resting before dinner when Koçi and Shule came into the room where I was sitting with Hysni and said to me:

«Comrade Enver, Shule and I are going to go to meet Marko (Ranković) and discuss with him how the work of the Party should be organized at brigade and division staff level.»

«Wouldn't it be better when we come back?» I asked him. «Make the request now and you'll have more time on our return.»

«No,» replied Koçi, «it's better to get it over and done with this evening and then our minds are at rest.»

«All right,» I said, «off you go.»

Koçi and Shule went to see Ranković while Hysni and I stayed in the house, indeed we did not wait dinner for them because the Yugoslav comrade accompanying us «advised» us to have dinner, since the «comrades might be late».

When they returned from the meeting, both Koçi and Kristo looked satisfied and happy, because they had received

«detailed and complete explanations about the method of work of the party at brigade and division level». The outcome of this night-time meeting between Ranković, Koçi and Shule was to emerge in Sofia.

The reasons which Koçi and Shule gave for their visit to Ranković in these circumstances did not convince me in the least, and no doubt, did not convince Hysni, either, but we said nothing to each other; we pretended that we found the visit natural.

The next day we left for Bulgaria. Anton Jugov and many other comrades of the Bulgarian leadership welcomed us very warmly at the border. We embraced and kissed like the closest comrades and brothers. They brought us best wishes from Dimitrov and told us that he personally and all the other comrades of the party leadership and the government would welcome us at the main station in Sofia. Our first contact with the representatives of the Bulgarian people was warm and moving. Ordinary people embraced us, welcomed us and wished us success on our visit and in strengthening the mutual relations between our two countries and peoples. I greeted them with a brief statement in which I expressed the great feelings of love which the Albanian people nurtured for the fraternal Bulgarian people and our belief that our friendly relations would steadily advance, and ended by calling:

«Long live your great leader Georgi Dimitrov!»

The people burst into a long ovation. In accord with the national tradition they gave us bread and salt, while a young girl presented me with a beautifully embroidered traditional Bulgarian costume.

«Each stitch in this costume is an expression of love for the Albanian people from the Bulgarian people,» she said, her eyes filled with tears of enthusiasm, and embraced me.

In this atmosphere we set out for Sofia.

We arrived. A great crowd had turned out to meet us, headed by the leadership and the great Dimitrov, with his manly face graven like a true revolutionary, with his long

hair blowing free, because he had removed his fur cap, despite the cold and the falling snow. He welcomed me on the platform, gave me his hand, pressed me to his chest and kissed me. It was a very moving moment for me. I flung my arms round his neck and did not release him. My eyes were filled with tears of emotion, because the day had come that the Party and the people sent me here to meet this great teacher of the proletariat, from whose example, teachings and advice I had learned, as his loyal pupil, how to stand and fight against the fascist invaders, against enemies of the people and the working class for the liberation of my Homeland, for the formation and tempering of my Party, for socialism and communism.

When the ceremonies at the station were over, we got into cars to go to the premises of the Bulgarian government. Dimitrov and I were in the first open car and we passed through long lines of people crowding the streets, the foot-paths, the squares, the windows and balconies. Albanian and Bulgarian flags, portraits and slogans about Albanian-Bulgarian friendship could be seen everywhere. What boundless love of the people for Dimitrov, for Stalin and for Albania! The square in front of the palace was packed with people. From the balcony of the palace we were to greet the fraternal Bulgarian people.

Before we went out on the balcony we stayed very close to Dimitrov. He was great in his exemplary modesty. He asked me about our people, our Party, our comrades. He spoke Russian while I spoke Albanian, because I knew very little Russian.

When we came out on the balcony, amidst ovations from the people, the voice of Dimitrov boomed out. He had a powerful, resonant voice though his breathing was laboured because it was hindered by asthma; he spoke with enthusiasm, with fire, with boundless love for our people. While listening to him I had my gaze fixed on him and in my mind I recalled his titanic struggles, the torture and suffering he had undergone for the cause of the world proletariat, thought about this proletarian who could never be broken, but who

rose continually like Antaeus, amidst the storms, for the triumph of the revolution.

My speech, too, was warmly received by the people of Sofia, because it was simple and expressed the ardent love and deepest feelings of our people and Party for the Bulgarian people, the Communist Party of Bulgaria and Dimitrov personally. I gave a brief outline of the history of our people in the past and during the National Liberation War, of our close Leninist links with the Soviet Union, with the heroic Red Army, with Stalin, and with Dimitrov's Bulgaria. I also mentioned our relations with the new Yugoslavia.

In the official joint talks of the two delegations, I spoke on behalf of our delegation and Dimitrov on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation.

I made a relatively lengthy exposition in which I described the development of the National Liberation War and the principles which guided our war. I related how the first foundations were laid and the people's state power was created during and after the war; I spoke about the formation of the National Liberation Army in the heat of battles and actions; about the mobilization of the people and the creation of the National Liberation Front. I described what policy we pursued in connection with the Front and the main forms of the work, pointing out the historical fact that the Front was led by the Communist Party, that neither in the Front nor outside it did we have other parties within the country. Then I spoke about the Party, without which nothing could have been achieved, spoke about the directives which we received from the Comintern, etc., etc.

I went on to give an outline of the general political and economic situation and very briefly touched on our relations with Yugoslavia. Of course, this was neither the place nor the occasion to go into detail about our relations, whether good or bad, with Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav leadership. What was going on in Tirana in connection with these relations I tried to keep deep within myself, to avoid implying to the Bulgarian comrades or anybody else that something bad was

occurring between us and Tito. Later, when the moment came, when the situation had ripened and become clear, then everything would be stated openly. The Bulgarian comrades themselves did not give us the occasion and did not ask us to go into detail about our relations with Yugoslavia. They had displayed Tito's portrait along with the portraits of Stalin, Dimitrov and me, and they, too, spoke only in general about their friendship with the fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia, their joint road for the construction of the new life, and that was all.

In my exposition, then, I «got over» the question of Yugoslavia without any embarrassment and pointed out to the friends that our internal political situation was strong, but that we were struggling against numerous, all-round difficulties for the development of our economy.

I spoke about the subversive activity of the Anglo-Americans. We were waging a continual war against agents dropped from the air, landed from the sea, or infiltrated over the border from Greece, and the latter country was carrying on ceaseless unrestrained propaganda making claims to Southern Albania and remained «in a state of war» with the People's Republic of Albania. I stressed that all this propaganda and subversive activity did not frighten our people at all, but on the contrary, they were being strengthened and tempered, increasing and sharpening their vigilance day by day.

Comrade Dimitrov congratulated me on my exposition and, to tell the truth, I retain to this day the impression that I had passed a great test, because I was worked up about being in the presence of Dimitrov, although, amongst all the great leaders that I have ever met, he was the most unpretentious. The respect and love which I had for him were precisely the factors which increased my emotion.

After I had spoken, Dimitrov rose and made a fiery speech about our friendship and especially about our people and their heroic wars.

We listened with the greatest attention to his words, to his profound thoughts when he spoke about the important

role of the Soviet Union and the great Stalin in the question of the crowning with success of the Second World War and the establishment of the new order in our countries. He opened to us a broad horizon about the problems of the foreign policy of our socialist countries, together with the Soviet Union, and the savage policy of Anglo-American imperialism and its satellites, against which we had to wage a stern fight in all fields. Dimitrov touched on the question of Greece where monarcho-fascist reaction ruled, as well as on the disturbed and unstable situation in neo-fascist Italy and stressed:

«They will be powerless to harm Albania because the new People's Albania knows very well how to defend itself and we shall defend ourselves together.»

Going on to mention the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Aid between Albania and Yugoslavia, Dimitrov, in the name of the Bulgarian government and people, proposed that a treaty of friendship and mutual aid should be signed between Albania and Bulgaria, also, which we had foreseen, too.

Our enthusiasm reached its climax. I stood up and in a brief and moving speech, because I could hardly speak from joy and emotion, I said:

«We are completely in agreement with your proposal. Our people and government will be extremely happy and grateful. This is a day of historic importance for our people,» etc.

We embraced and kissed. There had never been a happier day for us. It seemed to us that we had gained the heavens. We would make even more secure the borders of our Homeland for the freedom of which our people had shed so much blood through the centuries.

I am not going to speak about the ceremonies and visits which our delegation made in Sofia to the different institutions and factories, because there were many of them, and after all these years I cannot remember them all one by one, but the enthusiasm and love which the Bulgarian working people and working class displayed for the Albanian people have remained unforgettable for me.

In one great festive evening in Sofia they awarded me the title «Honorary Citizen of Sofia» and I remember that that evening we sang and danced with ordinary citizens and the Bulgarian leaders, just as if we were in Albania.

At one moment (I don't remember whether it was during this evening or at the dinner he put on to welcome us) Dimitrov said amongst other things:

«Our people honour and respect your people and your wonderful traditions and qualities. Since the time of my childhood I've heard the saying amongst our people, 'May you be as dauntless as the Arnauts, i.e., the Albanians.' Your quality of never bowing your heads in the face of any difficulty or danger is very well known amongst us.»

I looked at him carefully right in the eye in order to understand whether he had said this quite casually or had something else in mind, but I was unable to discover anything. He smiled at me and raised his glass.

«Yes,» I said, «this has been a feature of our people over the centuries. They have been attacked by many enemies, have done battle with them, have shed their blood, have made great sacrifices, but have never bent the knee. Now that we have the Party this feature is being further strengthened. We shall never give way in the face of any difficulty or obstacle, Comrade Dimitrov.»

«Good luck!» he said and we clinked glasses. «Long live your people!»

As I said, there were many visits and they were very cordial. At one cooperative that we visited they took us to a field of strawberries. I remember that we were accompanied there by Traicho Kostov, a deputy prime minister and minister of internal affairs of Bulgaria (the Bulgarian counterpart of Ranković who was condemned after the exposure of the Titoite betrayal and rehabilitated when the Khrushchevites came to power), as well as by Georgi Traikov, general secretary of the Bulgarian Popular Agrarian Union, who at that time was deputy prime minister and later was elected president of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the Peo-

ple's Republic of Bulgaria. Men and women welcomed us there. After we talked, an old man asked me about Georgi Traikov:

«Who's that?»

I told him who he was, but the old man got up and said to him:

«Where are you, brate?» You are the chairman of our Agrarian Party and in all my long life I've never seen you!»

This made an impression on us, because it was evidence of the weak links which these people had with the masses. Regardless of the fact that Traikov was of Stambolisky's¹ Agrarian Party, the Bulgarian Communist Party kept him very close to the leadership and, indeed, they told us that he was a communist, but they did not declare this.

The official dinner which Dimitrov put on for us will remain unforgettable. He was wearing a black suit. He seated Nexhmije on his right side while I, facing him, had his wife on my right. I remember a small but very significant detail. Before we began the speeches and the eating, Dimitrov gathered up the large range of spoons and forks he had in front of him and said to the waiter:

«Take these away, I've no need for twenty. One knife, fork and spoon is enough for me.» He was such a simple man that he could not tolerate bourgeois luxury and customs. Inspired by his simplicity, I, too, filled the waiter's hands with nickel-plated cutlery.

After Dimitrov had spoken I replied with very warm words, some of which I devoted to the great figure of Dimitrov, to his major role as a leader, not only of the Bulgarian communists, but of all the communists of the world, and described him as a pupil and very close collaborator of the great Stalin, etc.

The dinner passed in a very happy atmosphere. Dimitrov was a man who laughed readily and was very optimistic. When the dinner was over we returned in great spirits and with

* brother (Bulgarian in the original).

1 Leader of the Bulgarian Popular Agrarian Union founded in 1899.

indelible impressions to the residence in which we were staying, a palace of ex-King Boris. After we sat down in the sitting-room to smoke a cigarette and to talk over the impressions we had from the dinner, we went to our bedrooms. But I could not sleep. In my mind's eyes I was going over the impressions of the meetings and the warm words of Dimitrov, calling back to my mind his life of the undaunted fighter, the efforts and sacrifices he had made for the cause of his people and the world proletariat. It must have been well past midnight when I heard a knock at the door. I got up and opened it. At the door-step were Koçi Xoxe and Shule with frowning faces.

«What has happened? Have you still not gone to sleep?» I asked.

«We've not gone to sleep because we want to talk with you,» said Koçi.

«Is it that urgent?» I asked. «Couldn't you wait till next morning?»

«Shule and I are so worried that we could not sleep,» said Koçi Xoxe. «So we want to talk now!»

I stared at them fixedly for a moment, told them to wait for me in the sitting-room till I threw something on my back and went inside. Hysni had heard the knocking at the door of my bed-room and the voices after midnight and appeared at the door of his bed-room.

«Come, Hysni,» I said. «Koçi and Shule have something urgent to tell us!»

We sat down in the sitting-room and Koçi Xoxe began saying:

«I and Shule did not like your speech at the dinner and do not agree with what you said about Dimitrov!»

I opened my eyes in astonishment and shot a glance at Hysni, who was just as astonished as I was.

Koçi continued:

«We are not in agreement with all those epithets you used about him. We don't say that Dimitrov is not an outstanding man, but you gave him a major role.»

«I made no mistake in what I said. I did not exaggerate anything about Dimitrov,» I replied. «I should have said more, because he deserves it. It's you who are wrong, although I don't understand how such a thing causes you so much torture that you can't sleep for it! Not only ought we to speak of Dimitrov,» I continued, «but the whole revolutionary and progressive world has spoken about him in ardent terms which he fully deserves!»

Hysni intervened angrily, taking my side:

«What are you saying? What are these out-of-place things?! Everything in Comrade Enver's speech was correct!»

Koçi jumped up and said:

«That's what you think, but we think otherwise, we disagree with you.»

«We'll settle this matter in Tirana,» I told them in a stern tone. «This disagreement must not hinder us from carrying out our work with success and accomplishing the task with which the Party and the government have charged us.»

«Yes, yes,» exclaimed Koçi, «but in all that speech in which you praised Dimitrov so much you ignored Tito completely and did not say one word about him. I do not agree that Dimitrov should outshine the grandeur of Tito, his capacity and reputation as an outstanding revolutionary. Tito is the greatest figure and the most brilliant image of the peoples of the Balkans. You said, 'Dimitrov is an outstanding international figure', but this must be said about Tito, because he really is such a figure, and Tito's Yugoslavia today should become the very centre of the peoples of the Balkans.»

Then, I realized why they could not sleep and what all this «concern» was about and why they disagreed with us. I immediately remembered their meeting with Ranković in Belgrade and understood the whole significance and reason for that meeting, allegedly to receive party instructions, but, in fact, to receive directives to keep us under surveillance lest we go beyond the limits dictated by the Yugoslavs, «to

correct» us and to act in support of the secret directives of Tito-Ranković.

I told Koçi and Shule:

«This is a provocation you are committing, because I think that a toast at an official dinner in Bulgaria was not the place to speak of the merits of Tito. I mentioned Tito when I spoke of our friendship with Yugoslavia, and it seems to me that this was correct and sufficient, therefore, I do not budge from my opinion.»

«We do not agree with you!» persisted Kristo and Koçi red-faced.

«Neither do I agree with you. We shall discuss this question in Tirana. Now let us go to bed because we have work to do tomorrow,» I said curtly and stood up.

«I'm in full agreement with the opinion of Comrade Enver,» interjected Hysni and we went to our bed-rooms to lie awake all night.

This was the first incident that occurred in Bulgaria with Koçi and Kristo. There was to be another, this time in the form of an «amendment» to a document which we were to sign in connection with the development of trade between the two countries. It was a simple normal document drafted in principle, as is done in such cases. The two «adherents to principles» (put up to this by Ranković) told me that we should add to the text the words «in agreement with Yugoslavia».

I told them that it was not good for us to ask for such a thing to be put in.

«In practice no one ties our hands to prevent us acting as we see best,» I went on. «If we see it beneficial we sell and buy in Bulgaria, too, of course, first of all fulfilling the obligations we have under the agreements signed with Yugoslavia.»

However, since it was impossible to convince them (they were convinced about dependence on the Yugoslavs), in the end I said:

«Propose some sort of amendment and discuss it in the preparatory commission.»

Eventually, at the plenary meeting, on the intervention of Dimitrov, Kolarov¹, one of the Bulgarian leaders and a comrade of Dimitrov's, formulated something of this nature and the incident was closed. Koçi Xoxe had something to report to his colleague Ranković when we returned!

In our free time the Bulgarian comrades came and talked with us about various problems. Kolarov, too, was very unpretentious and friendly with us. One day he talked to us about Stalin, about the heroism of the bolsheviks, about the difficult situation in the Soviet Union after the revolution, about the 1st Five-year Plan and the enthusiasm of the masses. He also told us about his work in the Comintern and the time when he was sent to work in Mongolia.

«How difficult it was there!» related Kolarov. «The country and the people were just as in the depths of the Middle Ages, the lamas and the monasteries ruled. Each family was compelled to send one or two sons to become lamas. The lama institutions were all centres of Japanese espionage. The nomadic people were completely illiterate, ignorant, syphilitic, and suffered indescribable poverty. Doctors, medicines, bread were unknown to them. All they had was meat, *kumis* (mare's milk), sheep-skin clothing, horses, and nothing else. Belief in religion and mysticism were complete. When people died in Ulan Bator they did not bury them, but there was a pit and they threw them in there. Sometimes they threw them in still alive. On account of the climate the bodies did not putrify but 'dissolved.' The people lived in tents. With the aid of the Soviets the people's regime of Suhe Bator began to build some apartments,» continued Kolarov, «but no one would move into them. Great propaganda was necessary about everything, down to the smallest things, and in particular, a great struggle had to be waged against the influence of the lamas and their despotic structure supported by the Japanese.»

¹ At that time vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers and minister of foreign affairs of Bulgaria.

The moment came when we were to go to Kritchim, where we were to sign the agreements. On the way we visited historical sites, factories and cooperatives. Everywhere we were welcomed with indescribable joy and enthusiasm. Along the railway great masses of people standing in the snow cheered «Hurrah!». The train stopped, we were given gifts, started again, and thus we arrived at the place, the name of which I can't remember, where we were to leave the train and go to Kritchim by car.

When the train stopped the cheering crowd broke through the cordons and blocked the road. Dimitrov and I were the first to struggle through. Dimitrov said to me:

«They'll be here a long time. If we wait for the comrades we'll be caught up in the people again, therefore let you and me get in the car and 'break through'» (in a word, he meant like the comitadjis of old). And that is what we did. Dimitrov, I and the guard drove ahead through the snow. The convoy was a long way behind.

«We have no security guards, *brate*,» the driver said to Dimitrov.

«Drive on! We have the people to protect us,» replied Dimitrov.

Near Kritchim the people had blocked the road.

«You must speak to them!» Dimitrov said to me. «In Russian?»

«How can I speak to them?» I said. «I know a little Russian, but I can't speak with those few words I know.»

«*Davaj*,*» said Dimitrov, «you speak Albanian, because even without knowing Albanian, I'll translate faithfully for you, since I know what you want to say to them, for our feelings are the same, we have the one heart.»

And that is what we did. We stood up in front of the people, I spoke in Albanian with a few Russian words, and the dear old man translated into Bulgarian.

* Come on (Russ. in the original).

When we got back into the car Dimitrov said to me:

«The peasants won't be surprised how I know Albanian, because the Bulgarians and the Albanians have always been brothers and comrades-in-arms.»

Dear, beloved Georgi Dimitrov, honey flowed from your mouth, as our people say!

Finally we reached Kritchim. Kritchim is a big village where the kings of Bulgaria had the best lands and had built a beautiful hunting palace, both for summer and winter. In this palace, which was now the property of the Republic, we were the guests of the Bulgarian party and government and Dimitrov personally. In this beautiful place there was a marvellous park, with flowers growing in open beds and in hot-houses, which flourished and bloomed winter and summer. There they cultivated many kinds of trees, including some tall strong coniferous trees called sequoia, brought from Canada, as they told us. In this park they kept and fed animals and birds which had been tamed and acclimatized.

Here something unexpected and unpleasant happened through Kristo Themelko. On the second day he had got up early in the morning, taken a shot-gun and gone out into the park. When we had all gathered downstairs Shule came in «triumphantly» carrying a big dead bird.

«I shot it in the park,» he said proudly.

«What have you done!» exclaimed Yugov. «These are rare birds which we protect. We don't kill them, they are the ornaments of the park. But it doesn't matter!» he added to cover his annoyance. Kristo Themelko's feathers drooped worse than those of the bird he had shot. We felt very sorry and ashamed about what had happened.

In Kritchim we ended the talks, concluded and signed the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Aid. It was a solemn moment, especially for my comrades and me. The signing was done in the entrance hall. There a big table had been placed at which Dimitrov and I sat. We signed the documents, exchanged them, shook hands with each

other and embraced strongly. We had signed an historic act¹ of great importance which ensured the People's Republic of Albania against the eventual threats of enemies. The Albanian people and their Party would welcome with great cheering and enthusiasm this treaty signed with the Bulgarian people, their old friends who had now emerged into the light of socialism under the leadership of Dimitrov and the Bulgarian Communist Party and with the decisive aid of the Soviet Union and Stalin.

The snow had covered everything and on this joyful day everything looked marvellous. I forgot the villainous intrigues of Koçi Xoxe who strutted around like a «big gun» in his lieutenant-general's uniform, without which he never failed to appear in order to give himself authority.

After we had eaten and congratulated one another, photographs were taken to mark the occasion and Dimitrov proposed we take a ride through the park. Everybody agreed. Landaus, each drawn by two black horses, were awaiting us.

«You come with me,» said Dimitrov and we got in together with an interpreter. It was a marvellous drive. For me it was a great honour to sit so close to Dimitrov, my beloved teacher of communism and the revolution. On the way he began to ask me about comrades he had known, about Ali Kelmendi, about the democratic priest Fan Noli, and Dr. Omer Nishani. Then he asked me:

«What happened to the Trotskyite Zai Fundo?»

«We shot him,» I said. «He turned out to be an agent of the British and the feudals!»

«You did very well that you got rid of such rubbish,» said Dimitrov.

1 This treaty which we signed with Dimitrov was a symbol of the friendship between the Albanian and Bulgarian peoples, whereas now that the revisionists, such as Zhivkov and company — obedient lackeys of the Soviet social-imperialists, have come to power, this treaty is a dead letter. As to the friendship between our peoples, it will remain alive as it was in the time of our Renaissance men and in the time of the unforgettable Dimitrov. (*Author's note.*)

Then I asked Dimitrov what he thought about our Party and its line during the war and now.

He replied:

«It is a courageous, revolutionary party of the new type, as Stalin teaches us. The line of your Party has been correct. As far as I can judge it has shown maturity in the mobilization of the Front and the rallying of the people in it. Since there were no bourgeois parties in your country, you did well that you did not permit or encourage the formation of them, because they would have caused you difficulties, as they are trying to cause us. Look here, Comrade Enver,» continued Dimitrov, putting his hand on my knee, «keep the Party pure! Let it be revolutionary, proletarian and everything will go well with you!»

Dear Georgi Dimitrov! What he told me as we drove through the snow that morning in Kritchim is implanted in my mind and my heart forever. As long as I live I will be faithful to it and will fight to ensure that the Party is revolutionary and proletarian!

These were unforgettable moments, unforgettable days for our people and especially for me.

We parted from sister Bulgaria, from the great Dimitrov, from the Bulgarian people and comrades with tears in our eyes, thanking them from our hearts for their hospitality, for the great and sincere friendship which they displayed for our people, for the Party and the People's Republic of Albania.

All the members of the delegation were very happy at the prospect of returning to the Homeland and informing the people and Party about the great political results which we had achieved. In regard to aid in the economic field, despite the great poverty in our country, we did not ask for any on account of the fact that the Bulgarians were in great difficulties, too, and the Soviet Union was assisting them. For their part, they did not make any concrete proposal either, but, of course, the way was open to reciprocal trade and to the according of some credit when the situation became more favourable for them.

Even Koçi Xoxe and Kristo Themelko seemed happy. I

had the impression that they had understood the stupidity of what they had done and I thought that that unpleasant scene was forgotten. I thought that the very close and friendly stand of Dimitrov and all the Bulgarian comrades towards us, our Party and our country had caused them to assess their stand towards the course followed by our Party, especially in its relations to the Yugoslav leadership, in a different light. They should have realized that for us, neither the world, nor socialism began and ended in Yugoslavia. They should have understood that our Party, our country had their own role and importance which we had to ceaselessly safeguard and strengthen. Hence, it was the opportunity for them to start to clear the rubbish out of their heads. I saw a certain joy in their eyes and gestures, and our train journey through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia towards Belgrade passed happily. We sang, asked the Bulgarian and Yugoslav guards about the places we were passing through and they explained to us where battles had taken place, etc. We asked one another: Will Tito receive us?

As I said, when we passed through Belgrade he told us that we would talk about «our relations» when we returned and I knew that if they began, these talks would be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, matters had to be carried through to the end.

However, as soon as we arrived at the railway station in Belgrade it was obvious that talks were not going to take place. Apart from an even more frigid atmosphere than the last time, now only a few third- and fourth-rate officials had come to meet us. We got into cars and, after they took us to the same place where we stayed before, they prepared to depart in order to leave us «in peace». I asked the one who had been appointed to «accompany» me, or more correctly, to see me off, whether he knew when we were to meet Tito according to the promise made.

«Comrade Tito,» said the official «officially», «left two days ago for a friendly visit to Rumania!»

I nodded my head to let the official know that I under-

stood everything clearly and held out my hand to him. Neither he nor the others made any proposal for a program or suggested a meeting with any other comrade of the Yugoslav leadership. And I made no request either. The next day we set out for and arrived in Tirana.

VIII

THE TITOITES HEADING FOR INEVITABLE EXPOSURE AND DEFEAT

Enslaving offers. On the Co-ordination Commission ■ Yugoslav militarymen pour into Tirana: «Imminent danger is threatening Albania!» Nako Spiru insists on putting Mehmet Shehu at the head of the General Staff of the Army. Tempo's military theses ■ General Hamović demands the creation of a unified command ■ General Kuprešanin in Tirana. Tito: «I beg you to give us the base in Korça for one division.» Notifying Stalin about the question of the Yugoslav division ■ The 8th Plenum of the CC — a black stain on the history of the CPA. The temporary triumph of the Yugoslav theses ■ Monstrous attack of Koçi Xoxe and others on the Party and its sound cadres ■ Kuprešanin, Zlatić and others: «Tito wants you to demand the union with Yugoslavia.» ■ Astonishing haste of the Titoites ■ The historic letter of Stalin ■ Ignominious departure of Tito's envoys from Albania.

The «analyses» which began in our leadership after the accusations which they made through Savo Zlatić and after the suicide of Nako Spiru convinced the Yugoslav leadership that its strategic plan for turning Albania into the 7th Re-

public of Yugoslavia was proceeding as had been envisaged. In order to disguise themselves before giving the final blow the Yugoslavs made a temporary «retreat». They no longer attacked us directly, began to murmur about their «feelings of friendship» towards sister Albania and loudly advertized the «aid» which they gave us, on paper, of course. All over Yugoslavia, at meetings and rallies, on the radio, in the press, etc., they said that «in grave and difficult days we stand beside our Albanian brothers», that «for all our poverty we must save something and send it to Albania», and indeed, with collection boxes in hand, the Titoite jugglers even organized campaigns to collect charity for «the poor».

All this was a truly insulting and demagogic farce worthy of those who want to cover up and disguise tragedies with buffonery. Especially at the moments when we were to set out for Bulgaria this farce was played with greater fervour, Tito sensed that the unexpected invitation which we received from Dimitrov to visit Bulgaria was not something fortuitous: undoubtedly he saw in it the intervention of the Soviets and, first of all, of Stalin.

At the same time, this «popular internationalist aid» which was trumpeted inside and outside Yugoslavia was to serve the leaders of Belgrade as that layer of powder which is sprinkled over a massacred corpse. They hoped that the Albanian people would be blinded by the Yugoslav buffonery of «solidarity» and not realize that they were being stabbed in the back.

We ourselves now saw that something unpleasant and evil was being hidden behind all this «beautiful» façade. When Belgrade smiled, we had the feeling that something evil was being prepared for our Party and country. «The stick and the carrot», the accusations and «promises» of Tito and his henchmen were being felt and seen in their true light, as links of a chain, in Tirana.

However, in all this farce of «friendship» we saw the other side of the medal: the fever of fear and anxiety which haunted the chiefs in Belgrade, step by step, in the crime

which they were preparing to commit. Every action, every tactic of theirs against us, bore within itself the seeds of their inevitable exposure and the defeat of the plot. And the more the chiefs of the CPY were to hasten to commit their evil deed against us the nearer they were to approach their ignominious and inevitable doom.

Enslaving offers

On the eve of 1948, as a New Year «gift», the leadership in Belgrade concentrated its attention on us in two fields in particular: first, in the economy and second, in the field of defence, in the army.

In regard to the Party, they thought that they already had it completely in their hands. Since the Berat Plenum, their henchmen, especially Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, had become complete Titoites, had been perfected in the methods of conspirators, so that even without the direct interference of the Yugoslavs it was thought that they could guide the situation created according to the taste of their masters.

Thus, the Yugoslavs thought that in their agents recruited in the leadership of our Party they had the key to success, their strongest point; whereas in fact precisely here lay one of their weakest points, which would lead them to exposure and defeat.

This had to do with the anti-Marxist, Trotskyite concept of Tito and company about the party, its role and its functions. According to them, the base of the party was the «mob», was the «claque» which need be given no attention because it had no role other than to obey, blindly and without any opposition, the orders and directives which came «from above», from «the leadership» and especially from the «strong hand» in the leadership.

Proceeding from this concept, both in their own party

and in ours, they had concentrated their attention mainly on «the top ranks», on winning over a pro-Titoite lobby in the leadership, a lobby which, according to them, would lead the whole party like a flock of sheep into Tito's fold. However, when the time came, precisely this anti-Marxist concept was to lead its bearers to the brink of disaster. Four or five recruited agents, however powerful, would be nothing in face of the colossal strength of our Party which had been educated and tempered to lead the people on the course of safeguarding and strengthening their freedom, and not up the blind alleys where Tito and his gang wanted to drive them.

However, this was to be proved later. At first, Tito and company thought that through their agent, the organizational secretary Koçi Xoxe, they had our Party «in their grip» and since, according to them, matters would go like clockwork in the Party, they concentrated their main attention on our economy and army.

On the basis of «proposals» of the Yugoslav leadership, which Zlatić had presented together with the accusations, at the beginning of December Zlatić came with another Yugoslav, Sergej Krajger, with a bundle of files under his arm. Present from our side were Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and I. They «congratulated» us on being rid, at last, of Nako Spiru, the element who «has complicated and harmed matters and has even managed to cause mutual frictions and doubts between us», and then they opened the files.

«Now,» said Zlatić, «we want to put forward the question of the Co-ordination Commission more concretely. Comrade Krajger, one of our best experts on economic problems, has been charged by our leadership to carry the burden of chairman of this commission. It will be a Yugoslav-Albanian commission, that is, Albanian representatives will take part in it, too. It will follow the course of the development of the economy of our countries in detail, so that everything will be harmonized, that is, well co-ordinated.»

«When we met at the beginning of November,» I said to Zlatić, «I asked you what the character of this commission

would be and in what relationship the respective governments of the two countries would be with it and its competences. We are still completely unclear about this.»

«You are right,» «conceded» Zlatić, «because greater problems have preoccupied you. I shall reply to the best of my ability. You mentioned an extremely delicate problem, 'the relationship between the commission and the respective governments of the two countries'. I want you to understand me correctly in what I am about to say. The very idea of an economic union between our countries cannot be concretized without a common organ which, you might say, will stand and function between our two governments. If the work of economic union for the Yugoslav side is left solely in the hands of the Yugoslav government and, for the Albanian side, solely in the hands of the Albanian government, then troubles, conflicts, frictions and everything else will arise for us. The Co-ordination Commission will be the organ which eliminates these dangers.»

«Then is it to be an organ above our governments?» I asked.

«No, it will not be above the governments. Its competences will extend in the first place only over economic matters, thus in the other fields all the competences remain in the hands of your government.»

«What is that? Does that mean we are to be 'relieved' of economic matters?»

«You are misunderstanding me!» exclaimed Zlatić, angrily. «I did not say you should be relieved of the economy. I said that the field of competences of the commission will extend only to economic matters and moreover, even here, the commission will be engaged with the problems which have to do with common plans, with the most effective ways for the co-ordination of plans, with the definition and detailing of the budgets, investments and income, with checkup on the accomplishment of tasks and measures which will be allocated, hence with all the major problems in this field. After that let the government decide about the economy.»

«And what is left in all this for our government to decide, as you say, when the Co-ordination Commission knows and settles everything?» I asked him.

«I don't know why you are afraid of this commission, Comrade Enver,» exclaimed Zlatić. «You are proceeding from a mistaken idea about it and consequently you look on everything with suspicion. The matter cannot be discussed on this basis. You should have faith in the advantages of the commission. Our comrades in Belgrade have considered it carefully, have studied all the advantages of it and that is why we demand that the commission should be formed. It will be an organ to assist both you and us, will have a great deal of work and many tasks and I regret that you are questioning everything. We came with the idea that the time was over when doubts and frictions began over every issue.»

«My question was sincere and very concrete,» I said calmly. «I don't believe that either Comrade Tito or you want us to accept ideas or projects about which we are not clear.»

«I agree with you,» Zlatić «backed down». «But I say with conviction that you would not question us so much, if you had more faith in the sincerity and fairness of our proposals. Everything we say is for your benefit. Without an intermediary co-ordinating organ our governments will be faced with major difficulties. Our governments should not quarrel with each other through the fault of a few directors or specialists of the economy. Let comrades competent in this field solve the economic problems, let them have the friction with one another and find the proper solutions. Comrade Krajger is ready to cope with all the difficulties which will arise. Let the governments decide the major questions. That is clear. I don't know what Comrades Xoxe or Kristo have to say?»

«We thank you from our hearts for all this aid and these ideas which the Yugoslav leadership gives us,» replied Koçi Xoxe there and then. «I'm not a specialist in these matters, because the economy is not my sector, but I know in

my own mind that the Co-ordination Commission will advance the work and the things that occurred in the past will not occur again. I don't think that the Comrade Commander has no faith in you, either, but the economy is very complicated. Moreover, Nako Spiru confused us and we do not understand what is being done.»

«Quite right!» Zlatić congratulated Xoxe. «These problems of the economy are very difficult and complicated, especially those of economic union. In Belgrade the cream of our economic specialists are engaged in this work. I don't want Comrade Enver to misunderstand me, but I myself do not thoroughly understand all the secrets of these matters. If I knew them I would tell you. The main thing is the good spirit. Comrade Xoxe put it correctly. He is not a specialist, but his class instinct leads him to correct conclusions. Those who come from the intelligentsia ought to learn from him!»

Koçi Xoxe nodded his head very pleased with himself over the pat on the back they were giving him.

«In our leadership there is a splendid harmony,» continued Zlatić. «Let us take the relations between Tito and Kardelj. Comrade Tito has the class instinct and Kardelj relies heavily on this instinct.»

What he was hinting at was self-evident. But now there was no limit to their shamelessness.

After we debated for an hour or so about the «nature» of the commission and I several times heard such remarks as «you do not want to understand», «you do not want to believe», etc., Koçi Xoxe cleared his throat and said the final word:

«I think the commission should be created as the Yugoslav comrades say. The advantages which this commission will bring us will convince any comrade who has hesitations. From our side we should appoint Comrade Pandi Kristo to engage directly in this work. Of course, Pandi has not gone deeply into economic problems but the main thing is that he has the class instinct well developed...»

In this situation and in these circumstances of pressure

and blackmail we were obliged to accept Tito's first offer, the creation of the Co-ordination Commission which, however camouflaged, comprised in the Titoites' plans the initial form, or embryo, of a future government of the state of occupation.

Very quickly, all the filth from this essentially neo-colonialist creation would begin to stench.

My opinion that this commission might turn into a kind of government over the government was being confirmed completely. Krajger gathered in his hands almost all the competences of our government, signed and sealed everything which had to do with the Albanian economy and its ways of development. In the framework of the Co-ordination Commission various sub-commissions were set up, which represented duplicates of our government departments. And whereas up till now, with the earlier forms of «collaboration» the Yugoslavs had robbed us as thieves, from now on they robbed us openly, legally, as owners.

In time and cautiously we were to oppose them in this field, too, but initially, when the «economic union» was still covered with phrases about «friendship», our responses were limited. As soon as I mentioned to Koci Xoxe any doubt or concern about the decline of our economy, he immediately tried «to pacify» me:

«Why do you worry about the economy?» Xoxe said to me. «Now that we have signed the economic treaties with Yugoslavia the aid will come. The important thing now is to prepare for the analyses of the Plenum which have remained up in the air.»

Several times on end I asked Pandi Kristo to inform us how the work in the Co-ordination Commission was going, but he answered the same way as Xoxe. Indeed Pandi did not know how to put two words together, did not know how to report, therefore he said curtly:

«Comrade Commander, don't you worry about the economy, because Comrade Krajger and the commission take the closest interest in it.»

The coming Plenum of our Central Committee, where

the discussion would take place in the spirit of Tito's accusations, was being used by the agents of Belgrade as a means of blackmail to intimidate us and compel us to accept what they told us.

Meanwhile militarymen poured into Tirana as never before. Yugoslav generals, colonels, majors and captains with shining epaulets came and went in Albania as though it were their own domain. They brought with them the great «concern» of the Yugoslav leadership about the «extremely acute» situation abroad and about «the imminent danger» which was threatening our countries as never before! The great noise Tito's men were making about this «alarm» had been echoing in our ears for two years.

Of course, it was more than true that the situation around our countries was not calm and without dangers, but it seemed to us that all that tension and alarm in which Tito's emissaries presented the situation was unjustified. It seemed to us that things were being exaggerated.

As in all the other fields, here, too, it was soon to emerge that they were aiming at something else.

The Belgrade leadership was making ready to present its next «offer». In appearance this offer had to do with the «joint» defence of our freedom, but in essence it was nothing but an official demand to hand over the freedom and independence of our country as a gift to the chauvinists of Belgrade.

For years they had been trying to achieve this through the most «suitable» and least «obvious» ways and means, but without success. This is what had happened with their feverish efforts to take control of our army, to orientate and organize it as a part, a corps of the Yugoslav army, subordinate to the Yugoslav staff.

For us the question of the army had always been sacred, like the question of the Party itself. It had been created, organized, educated and tempered with the teachings of our Party, with the great experience of the liberation wars of our people, and with the experience of the Soviet army. In

regard to the political, ideological and military education of our army, the problems have been decided categorically on the correct Marxist-Leninist road of our Party.

The basis of our National Liberation War was partisan warfare, the fighting experience of our forefathers, which was enriched in the new conditions of a modern war, therefore, during the war we further enriched our experience with that of the revolutionary war of other peoples and, first of all, the Soviet peoples. All this experience we gathered for ourselves and elaborated for ourselves, because right through the war up to the complete liberation of Albania we had no contacts at all with the Soviet army, which did not pass through our country.

However, the fact is that for our army the Red Army, which was born from the Great October Revolution, was the most beloved army, and from the first days of Liberation we set ourselves the task of educating our army with lofty patriotism on the Marxist-Leninist road and with the example of the Red Army of Stalin.

We began to send many cadres and militarymen who had just come through the war to *uchilishche**, to other military schools and academies in the Soviet Union, which always accepted them and we were whole-heartedly grateful for this.

We sent very few cadres to the Yugoslav military schools, because in the first years after Liberation the Yugoslavs had few such schools. They themselves, like us, sent large numbers of their sons to study in the Soviet Union. Thus we did not have obvious frictions with the Yugoslavs over this question, they did not express displeasure that we preferred the military schools of the Soviet Union and not theirs. The frictions, their anti-Sovietism and anti-Albanianism were to be displayed openly later, precisely when their bourgeois nationalist and chauvinist sentiments began to assume more marked and more numerous forms, when their megalomania,

* Rus. in the original.

their sense of the «capability» and «capacity» of the «great and powerful Yugoslav state» began to be cultivated and developed. This was apparent in the military sector as in all other sectors.

Taking advantage of those links which had been created during the war years between our two parties (and this we regarded as a normal and necessary thing), the Yugoslavs aimed to leave our army in a deplorable condition, without organization and without sound leadership.

Initially we asked them to give us the regulations they had, with the aim that we would study them and adapt them to our conditions. They sent them very readily, accompanied with «specialists on the regulations». However, they caused us a great deal of trouble. Every three to four months the regulations were changed. The training was not carried out on a studied basis, but just as it pleased one or the other Yugoslav «specialist».

The reason was not that they did not know. No, they wanted to leave our army weak and disorganized, with the aim that it would not be able to take counter-action against them later when the appropriate moment came.

A damaging role in this situation was played by Kristo Temelko, the Director of the Political Directory of our Army, who had fought well and was sincere, but after the Berat Plenum, Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo got their hooks into him, having in mind that he was of Macedonian origin, and he was implicated in the ranks of the elements who worked in favour of every «orientation» that came from Yugoslavia.

I frequently summoned Shule and asked him angrily:

«What is this? Further changes to the regulations?»

«Don't misunderstand us, Comrade Commander!» he said.

«We are in the first steps. We are going to build a modern army. At the time when we had none at all, the first regulations were a good step towards modernization. When the second ones came, obviously, they were improved. Later they changed them again. They work, these clever devils, rack

their brains and regulate the regulations. There is no end to perfection, Comrade Commander!»

«That's all very well, there is no end to perfection, but this situation must come to an end,» I told him. «What is this? As soon as our soldiers start to learn one set of regulations you replace it with another!»

«It's all to the good.»

«No,» I said, «this is disorganization rather than organization.»

I saw that the situation was not changing and discipline was falling apart. I observed that, although I was Commander-in-Chief, I was virtually pushed to one side, in order to deal with «the most important things», a little of everything. Things could not proceed in this way. Nako, as one completely involved in the game which was being played «far from me», brought me all kinds of unpleasant facts and stories which he learned from his «men». I was convinced that the army must be taken firmly in hand. Among the first measures which I decided to take was the reorganization of the General Staff. When we discussed this question, Nako proposed insistently that Mehmet Shehu should be placed at the head of the General Staff because he was «a born soldier, well trained, who had proved himself».

«It's true he has proved himself,» I told Nako, «but from two aspects, both good and bad.»

As to his bad aspects I had in mind especially his sectarian acts during the war, as well as the other fact that when we had criticized him for his sectarianism, he had swung to the opposite, to opportunism. I had in mind also that he frequently acted on his own, he was conceited, demanded discipline from the others, but was not all that disciplined himself towards the line of the Party and the orders of the General Command, to the point that during the National Liberation War he did not carry out the order for the movement of the 1st Division to the north, until he was given a second clear-cut order.

These were the things I had in mind in regard to Mehmet Shehu's negative aspects when Nako proposed to me his

appointment as chief of the General Staff. Of course, from what we knew of him at that period, I also took account of his positive aspects, which impelled me to believe that under the leadership of the Party he would rid himself of those negative traits which we recognized in him. Likewise, the fact that he was studying in the Military Academy in the Soviet Union added to my hope that Mehmet Shehu would strongly oppose the mish-mash which the Yugoslavs were creating in our army. With people like Tahir Kadare, Nexhip Vinçani and Pëllumb Dishnica, and some others, the situation could not be corrected.

We put forward the proposal in the Bureau and, after some minor hesitations, even Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo agreed. We summoned Mehmet Shehu from Moscow, where he was studying in the «Voroshilov» Academy, and at our first meeting I told him about the situation in our army, related the history of the Yugoslav regulations and before I had really finished he burst out with extreme expressions as was his habit:

«The brilliant military strategic art of the Red Army will find its most complete affirmation in the whole life of our army. We shall place the regulations of the Soviet Army in the hands of every soldier and will not allow even a full-stop or a comma to be altered in them...»

«This is not what's wanted, either,» I told him. «We long ago gave the orientation that we should have our own regulations, which should not be just a complete translation of the regulations of sister armies. The mistake the comrades have made up till now has been that they have based themselves only on the Yugoslav regulations which have been time after time. We must not permit such anomalies any more. Account must be taken of the Soviet regulations, first of all, and the good points of the Yugoslav regulations must be looked at, but we must work to ensure that our regulations are based on our own experience, with the objective that in the future we shall have regulations which are completely our own.»

«This is what I wanted to say,» replied Mehmet Shehu,

backing down and promising solemnly: «We shall decide everything in a creative way, on the basis of the line of the Party and our rich experience of the National Liberation War.»

Thus, applying the Stalinist art in the organizational and ideo-political structure of the army in our conditions, we decided to adopt the Soviet military regulations as the base. At the same time we asked Stalin to send us some Soviet military advisers as well, to assist in the organization of the General Staff and the detachments. Stalin sent us good men with military and political experience.

This course which we pursued consistently did not please the Yugoslavs. They considered themselves «insulted» and their military attaché and his aides slandered and criticized everything and incited our officers against the Soviet advisers, the Soviet regulations and the Soviet experience. A certain Spiro Serdžentić, a Yugoslav officer who had come allegedly to exchange the political experience of the Yugoslav army with the Political Directory of our Army, but who in fact maintained contact with Kristo Themelko, Pëllumb Dishnica, etc., displayed special activity in this anti-Albanian and anti-Soviet campaign.

Although we attacked them, these actions were being carried out continuously, reaching the point when some of the Yugoslavs, beginning from the main ones, like Ambassador Josip Djerdja and Tito's «adviser» to us Savo Zlatić, etc., were so blinded by indignation that they took our officer comrades who had graduated from the military schools and returned to their Homeland for Soviet officers, and «complained» to us about this large number of «Soviet advisers» which we were bringing in. Later they made another attempt to set us on a wrong course. They summoned Kristo Themelko, Mehmet Shehu and some others to Belgrade, to a military meeting or seminar, at which Vukmanović-Tempo (at that time political director of the Yugoslav army) presented «the military theses of the Yugoslav army». After this, through Shule, they tried to persuade us that we, too, should adopt those anti-Marxist and openly anti-Soviet theses. Kristo Themelko,

indoctrinated by Tempo, came to me all enthusiasm, praised these theses to me, and proposed their adoption.

«Do you have these theses written out?» I asked him.

«I have ample notes,» he replied boldly. «We were together with Mehmet Shehu at that seminar, we have everything noted down accurately.»

«Very well,» I said. «Write out these things you have presented to me, and bring them to me so that we can study them more carefully.»

A few days later Themelko brought me the «theses». They were the same ideas and claims which we had heard long ago about the «specific experience of the Yugoslav army in the National Liberation War», about the «creative application» of military science by Tito, about the «importance of this experience in the struggle against the stereotypism of earlier revolutions», etc., etc., except that now they were elevated to art, to theory. According to them, «in the conditions of the Balkans and Europe as a whole, the experience of the October Revolution and the Red Army are no longer of value», because «the new conditions are different from those of the October Revolution», and also because «the Red Army belongs to a country which is thirty years ahead in the construction of socialism.» Thus, according to Tempo, the forms of organization and functioning of the Red Army were allegedly unsuitable for us!

After I carefully studied the Yugoslavs' «theses» I summoned Themelko and Mehmet Shehu and gave them my clear-cut opinion:

«In these theses there are incorrect, mistaken views and we must not adopt them in any way. We do not disdain any good experience,» I told them, «but these theses do not contain such a thing. Then, why should we adopt their theses when we have our own and the Soviet experience?»

Thus, this effort of the Titoites failed, too.

From all these stands of ours, as well as from the detailed information which they received from the sources of the secret agency which they had created, the Yugoslavs were convinced that they could not use our army as a blind tool

to realize their secret aims. So they changed their tactics.

In July 1947, a big Yugoslav military delegation headed by Vukmanović-Tempo and Koča Popović (the former, political director and the latter, chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army) came to Albania and held intensive discussions with our representatives, Kristo Themelko, Mehmet Shehu, etc. During those days I was preparing to go to Moscow and when we returned, Mehmet Shehu and Kristo Themelko came to inform me:

«The talks gave brilliant results,» said Mehmet Shehu.

«The Yugoslav comrades take a serious view of the alarming situation in the Balkans and proposed to give us major supplies of military material, all-round aid and mutual collaboration in all sectors of defence.»

«What is meant by this collaboration?» I asked.

«More or less like the collaboration in the other sectors. 'The spirit of the Economic Convention should be extended to the army, too,' Tempo told us. They proposed concrete measures about raising the efficiency of the army, about the extension of military projects, about equipment, communications, clothing, etc. In short, we should have a bigger army, better equipped technically, better clothed, shod and fed. That is, a modern army. We are defining the concrete measures for this major undertaking.»

«All these things are necessary,» I told Mehmet Shehu, «but you must bear in mind our conditions. Can our economy cope with all these demands immediately?!»

«You must not worry about this. In the spirit of the Convention, the Yugoslav comrades agreed to cover our expenditure in the army with their budget!»

This seemed to me extremely suspect. The «friends» who were fulfilling almost nothing of what they had undertaken in the economic sectors were now becoming extremely generous in regard to the army! And when Kristo Themelko considered it «necessary» to add to what Mehmet Shehu said, my doubts and worries were further reinforced.

«The Yugoslav comrades are going to treat our army the

same as their army!» added Shule. «Tempo said that in the spirit of the Economic Convention, while unifications in the economy are important, the unification of our armies is just as important, if not more so!»

«What? What is this unification of the armies?!» I asked shocked.

«He did not say that, I did not hear it!» Mehmet Shehu intervened quickly when he saw how shocked I was.

«He spoke about the extension of the spirit of the Economic Convention to the army, too,» Themelko replied quietly. «We were together in all the talks and we agreed to everything. What is the Economic Convention? The unification of prices, equalization of currencies, customs union. I understand this spirit in the army as unification of armies.»

«Did Tempo say this or is this how you understood it?» I asked, looking at him sternly.

«Perhaps I have confused the matter,» mumbled Shule.

«'Perhaps I have confused the matter', you say,» I retorted angrily. «Why don't you rather say that you saw the relations between our armies as those between the lek and the dinar?»

Mehmet Shehu «declared» once again that this «has not been said». This «would be a mistake», «Comrade Shule should not make naive comparisons», etc.

This problem was closed, considering it a blunder of Shule. However, immediately after the accusations which Zlatić communicated to us in November, we heard with shock and regret and were finally convinced that what Shule «had thought», but Mehmet Shehu allegedly «had not heard» (!) in July, was more than true. The Yugoslavs quite openly demanded the unification of our armies, that is, the placing of our army under the general command of the Yugoslav army.

During one of those days Mehmet Shehu came to me and said:

«Comrade Commander, in the General Staff we are quarrelling because there is talk about the unification of the two commands of our armies and the Yugoslavs want to eliminate you!»

These were the moments after Nako Spiru's suicide, the moments when Koçi Xoxe had drawn his sword and was brandishing it left and right. In the analyses which we were making, amongst other accusations raised were those about the «unsatisfactory situation in the army», especially in the General Staff, about «the stereotype spirit» in which we were educating the army (!), about «the underestimation of the military experience of the Yugoslav comrades,» etc.

Initially these attacks were made by «criticizing» the chief of the General Staff Mehmet Shehu. Especially in a number of people in the Political Directory of the Army with whom the Yugoslavs were in direct contact, such a feeling was crystallizing, not only against Mehmet Shehu, but also against me. This was still not being done openly, but indirectly that is where it led, because it turned out as if I had proposed Mehmet Shehu as chief of the Staff, and supported him, etc. On the other hand, since I was Commander-in-Chief, now that it was said that «things are not going well in the General Staff» this was a direct attack against me for «permitting» this situation!

Mehmet Shehu, who felt that his position was shaky, to save himself from this situation «opposed» the Yugoslavs openly (later I shall relate what this «opposition» was), and tried to gain my backing and support. His statement that, «the Yugoslavs are trying to eliminate you», did not surprise me at those moments, because we were at the climax of the analyses in the Bureau, but nevertheless I asked him in what direction he saw this thing.

«General Hamović, Tempo's deputy, has come with a group of militarymen and they are demanding, not only the unification of our armies, but also the creation of a unified command which will direct the activities and training of the unified army,» explained Mehmet Shehu.

«I opposed them openly,» he added.

I took a very serious view of the information which Mehmet Shehu gave me, «informed» Koçi Xoxe about this, too, and told him we should organize a meeting in which, in the

presence of Mehmet Shehu and Kristo Themelko, Hamović should make the ideas of the Yugoslav leadership «clearer» to us.

The meeting was held, but Hamović did not take part. He had gone to inspect the detachments personally and to make contact with the various chiefs of our army!

«Mehmet Shehu has been hasty in the conclusion which he draws and in all the information which he has given you!» Shule attacked him. «We were going to inform you about everything they said at the meeting, but the matters have still not matured.»

«What? Do you think that I should be informed when you have decided everything? Such a thing is not permitted in any sector, least of all in the army!» I told Themelko.

«You are right, Comrade Commander, but we are in the phase of discussion. You are occupied with other work and Mehmet Shehu is manoeuvring to confuse us, just as his friend Nako Spiru did. It has not been said that you should be eliminated. You remain Commander-in-Chief.»

«Whether or not I remain, neither you, I, nor Hamović decides this. The Party, the representative organs of the people in power decide this!» I said to him.

«The placing of our army under the Yugoslav command leads you to my conclusion,» put in Mehmet Shehu.

«Who said that the command would be Yugoslav?» exploded Koçi Xoxe. «It will be a joint, unified command.»

«You, too, have been informed about this?! How is it that you did not inform me?» I asked Xoxe immediately.

He was nonplussed for a moment but now he had become a master of escaping from «check-mate».

«No! After you spoke to me yesterday I was worried and asked Shule. He made things clear to me.»

It was plain that he was lying, but now lies and deception were becoming a system and it was in vain to try to discover the roots of them.

«They are only some ideas, Comrade Commander, which apply not only to us, but also to the Bulgarian army,» The-

melko tried to calm the atmosphere. «We shall present the platform of unification to you when the idea is properly worked out. Mehmet Shehu is trying to split us with the aim of covering up his own mistakes. Since he became chief of the General Staff he has done nothing but damage. There is no harmony between the General Staff and the Political Directory. Mehmet Shehu wants to do everything himself, elbows other comrades out and offends people over nothing. Now he tells you that allegedly 'you are being eliminated', but when we were in Belgrade he himself eliminated you.»

«Kristo Themelko be careful about what you say!» shouted Mehmet Shehu angrily. «You are lying to the Commander for evil aims!»

«Do you remember what you said to Comrade Tito when we met him in Belgrade?» replied Shule, quite unperturbed. «'Under the leadership and supreme command of Comrade Tito our armies will become invincible!' That is what you said!»

Mehmet Shehu's face turned red and he did not know what to say. Then he muttered:

«That was a toast! Exaggerated things are said in toasts. And I proposed a toast to Comrade Enver, too...»

«Don't talk to us about toasts here,» interrupted Koçi Xoxe. «And you, Mehmet Shehu, pull yourself together. With these things that you are saying you will further alienate us from friendly Yugoslavia! When you go to Belgrade you butter up Tito, here you do the same thing with the Commander. You are dishonest with both of them. I know you very well, I know you inside out, just as I knew Nako Spiru.»

Mehmet Shehu turned pale and seemed frozen to the spot.

«We are going to look into your work carefully,» continued Koçi, «because the Plenum is coming up. We shall settle all these things at the Plenum.»

A few days later, at a joint meeting of the General Staff and the Political Directory of the Army, Mehmet Shehu was faced with the full attack. There were plenty of grounds

on which to catch him in mistakes, all of them were gathered up against him, they were labelled as «anti-Yugoslavism» and the proposal to discharge him from the function he held was presented to the Political Bureau! In the existing situation the opinion of the Bureau in this case, too, was to be just a matter of form. Everything had been predetermined outside the Bureau. At the end of December 1947 Mehmet Shehu was replaced by Beqir Balluku.

It was quite obvious that things were on the decline in the army, as in all other sectors. I was fully convinced that the question of «unification» and the «unified command» was not an «idea in the process of elaboration», as Koçi Xoxe and Kristo Themelko tried to present it, but a clear-cut demand. At that period, Kristo Themelko and the new chief of the General Staff Beqir Balluku were summoned to Belgrade allegedly for «preliminary discussion and consultation», but it seemed to me that all this was a manoeuvre which was fraught with other dangers. I felt that it was absolutely necessary to have a quiet consultation with our comrades, but Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo did not agree that we should engage ourselves on a «project» when we had more «important things in front of us — «the deepening of the analyses for the Plenum»! I wanted to consult the Soviet comrades, too, but Koçi Xoxe leapt up in the air as if he were stung by a wasp:

«Consult the Soviets?!» he cried. «In no way! We are not clear yet and we will confuse the VKP! Let us wait to hear what the comrades have to tell us when they return from Belgrade, and then see what to do!»

Eventually the comrades returned. Only this time they were neither alone nor empty-handed. With them came a Yugoslav general with a resounding name, which when you heard it, created the impression that hob-nailed boots were marching «crunch-crunch» on the cobblestones. This was General Ku-prešanin. He had brought a whole suite of colonels and majors and an «extremely urgent and important» message for me from Tito personally.

As far as I remember, I received them the day following their arrival in Tirana. We exchanged the usual greetings and the General started directly into his theme:

«On the special order of our supreme commander, the Minister of People's Defence, Marshal of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, I have come to you to bring a series of proposals of exceptional importance. What I have to communicate to you, as well as information about my identity, is communicated officially and in detail in this personal letter from Comrade Tito. Allow me to hand it to you!»

He rose to his feet, stood to attention, took one step forward and held out the envelope to me, all solemnity, as if he were presenting his letter of credentials.

«Now allow me to communicate to you orally the purpose of my dispatch here so unexpectedly. The situation around us presents greater threats than ever. We have information that in Greece the preparations are being completed for an attack which will be aimed initially against your southeastern borders.»

He was silent for a moment, and then said to the Yugoslav officer whom he had with him:

«The map!»

Immediately a big map of the Balkans on which arrows, circles, flags and all kinds of other multi-coloured lines struck the eye was unrolled.

«It is envisaged that the attack will begin in this territory,» said Kuprešanin, pointing to the border in the Korça-Erseka zone. «We have information also that simultaneous attacks may begin from the sea. The Greek aggressive forces, supported by the Anglo-American forces and means, will try to smash your defence with a rapid general assault and then penetrate in depth... In these conditions, our leadership, extremely worried and loyal to its obligations under the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid, considers that a series of urgent measures should be taken. In regard to the main one, I shall cite textually what Comrade Tito writes to you in the letter I handed to you,» said Kuprešanin. He opened his brief-

case, took out a sheet of paper and began to read: «Because of such an unclear situation, I beg you to give us the base in Korça for one division and for the auxiliary technical units. In this way the possibility will be created for you to secure the sector in the direction of the sea better and, in case of a provocation, our units will be able to intervene more quickly.»¹

«This is the main and urgent proposal of the Yugoslav leadership,» continued Kuprešanin. «At the meeting they had with Comrade Tito, Comrades Balluku and Themelko agreed and, convinced that you would have no opposition either, I and the group which accompanies me came to begin work immediately. We will leave urgently for Korça to examine the terrain and see where our first division will be deployed...»

«I must interrupt you, General,» I told him. «Comrade Tito's proposal is of such importance that it can never be passed over with a casual communication.»

«Everything I said you have there in writing from Tito himself!» replied Kuprešanin.

«This I believe,» I continued, «but we have just heard it. We must study it, discuss it in the leadership of our Party and state and then we shall give you our reply.»

«How is it possible!» exclaimed Kuprešanin in «astonishment». «Your comrades who are engaged directly with the army showed themselves extremely ready and reasonable.»

«No one has authorized our comrades to approve a proposal of any kind whatever without first having the opinion of the leadership of our Party and my opinion as Commander-in-Chief,» I replied. «Moreover, such an action, if not carefully weighed up, may create great problems.»

«The course you suggest could be followed,» persisted Kuprešanin, «but bear in mind the situation. We can wait for your analyses, but will the enemy wait until you are convinced?!»

1 From the letter of J. B. Tito addressed to Comrade Enver Hoxha, January 26, 1948. CAP.

«Whether or not we are convinced,» I said, «this will emerge in the end. As for the enemy, first, I think that in this situation, they have no possibility to attack us. Second, even if they do attack us, we are capable of dealing with them ourselves.»

«I brought the assessment of our leadership which has ample information about these preparations. Do you not believe this?!»

«You may have this information,» I said, «but one thing is now well known: a general offensive of the patriotic forces has just been launched in Greece and the government army is engaged in fighting them.»

«Let us assume that this is so! What is wrong with our taking preliminary measures?» Kuprešanin tried to persuade me.

«There are several things wrong with it,» I said curtly. «First, we, for our part, cannot approve such an action without thrashing it out well in our leadership and I tell you that I, as Commander-in-Chief, do not agree. Second, this hasty action would create great concern amongst our people.»

«Comrade Tito has foreseen this,» the General interrupted me, «and here is what he writes in the letter: 'I think that all these actions should be carried out quietly and unnoticed.' We have instructions to organize everything in secrecy without it coming to the ears of the people.»

«And you believe that this is possible?!» I asked him. «Do you think that the people are goats? Indeed, even if we were to agree to your proposal we could not take any action without first explaining it to the people and convincing them. The people have the right to call us to account and to reject an action which does not seem right to them. Third,» I continued, «such an action would increase the tension of the situation in the Balkans and in the international arena. The enemies would begin to speak in the way that suits them.»

«Comrade Tito has foreseen this, too,» said Kuprešanin, «and he writes in his letter: 'The enemy will learn of such a thing, but when our units are established there we have

no reason to keep it secret, because this will show that our alliance is not a formal thing, but, on the contrary, that we are definitely determined to defend our borders together.' Indeed, Comrade Tito thinks that after the division is established in Korça,» continued Kuprešanin, «if the press asks you or Comrade Tito about it, you should declare that 'this base has been given by agreement for the needs of the security, not only of the Albanian borders, but also of the Yugoslav borders.'»¹

«Comrade General,» I said, «we have discussed this more than was necessary. We heard your communication and we have Tito's letter. Now let the responsibility rest upon us. We shall give you our reply at the proper time. This is for our good and for yours.»

«The best thing would be for the division to be placed as quickly as possible with the aim that reaction should not have any possibility to undertake any act for the occupation of your country!» persisted Kuprešanin.

«But the worst thing would be if, from such a precipitate action, enemies or friends were to accuse us that Albania has been occupied by the Yugoslav troops!» I replied to the General and I saw that momentarily he went completely pale.

With this the meeting came to an end. We parted very coldly with Kuprešanin and as he was leaving he asked me:

«Will you be very long in giving your answer?»

«I believe it will be given at the proper time!» I replied frigidly.

Koçi Xoxe, who had been standing there like a black monk throughout the debate, intervened and said to me:

«The situation is very alarming, Comrade Enver, and we should not put off this internationalist aid of the Yugoslav brothers.»

Kuprešanin's face immediately brightened and he stood staring at me, awaiting my reply.

¹ All the quotations in inverted commas have been taken from Tito's letter of January 26, 1948. CAP.

«If the situation is so alarming,» I told Koçi in a loud voice so that Kuprešanin would hear clearly, «then, let the Yugoslavs deploy their army close to the north of Greece within their own borders.»

General Kuprešanin could not control his anger, he muttered something and departed. Koçi Xoxe, trying to appear «calm» and extremely «concerned about the situation», said to me:

«It seems to me that you were hasty. Comrade Kuprešanin will notify Comrade Tito and open up problems for us.»

«What they are demanding is extremely dangerous and delicate. I gave him my opinion, convinced that the Bureau will be of the same opinion.»

«All right, let us meet and decide today or tomorrow!» implored Xoxe.

«No! The coming of the Yugoslav division is not a matter to be decided hastily here and now. It is a decision of importance for our future and the future of our friendship with Yugoslavia,» I said in such a tone as to convince him that I would not budge from this.

«I think that they, too, are concerned about our friendship,» added Koçi. «Is it a small thing for Yugoslav soldiers to come and be killed to defend our borders? Our divisions did this when they went to the aid of Yugoslavia.»

«That was a different situation. Then we were in hot pursuit of the Germans. Who are the Yugoslav soldiers going to pursue here?» I asked him.

«They will be the first to meet the Greeks if they attack us,» said Xoxe.

«If the Greeks attack us, let us meet the first assault. The friends can help us if they are concerned about the freedom and independence of Albania,» I replied and shook hands with him.

«Well, well, but I say we should raise the matter in the Bureau as quickly as possible,» said Xoxe as he was leaving. «We cannot keep Tito waiting.»

Convinced that we were facing a great danger with the bitterest consequences, I decided to carry out an action solely «on my own responsibility» for the first time. Through the Soviet embassy I informed Stalin about what Tito demanded of us and, while awaiting the reply, with great effort I managed to postpone raising in Bureau the proposal about the dispatch of the Yugoslav division for the time being. To this end I exploited a «favourable» circumstance: the decision to summon the meeting of the 8th Plenum of the CC of the Party at the beginning of February. I say a «favourable circumstance» because both the Yugoslavs and their agents amongst us, following the suicide of Nako Spiru, gave this meeting exceptional importance. They had made all their preparations to ensure that the Plenum officially endorsed the «correctness» of Tito's accusations against us and adopted the line of the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia. It was not fortuitous that the proposal about the deployment of the Yugoslav division was made on the eve of the Plenum. This was done with the aim that, under the pressure of severe measures which the Plenum was clearly going to take, we would accept the Yugoslav military intervention in Albania without raising our voice in opposition. At the same time, the urgent dispatch of Yugoslav troops to our territory would serve as open blackmail to ensure that matters in the Plenum would go in the way that suited the Yugoslavs. Thus, we would find ourselves between two powerful fires, the measures of the Plenum and the intervention of the Yugoslav army, which would create an insurmountable situation for us: this is precisely how I assessed the situation, and therefore, taking account of all the consequences, I insisted that one of these two evils should be averted. Since it was impossible to avert the holding of the Plenum at those moments, I thought that I should strive to avert the dispatch of the Yugoslav division, and in this I succeeded.

Stalin's reply came very quickly, a few days before we began the proceedings of the Plenum. Stalin told us that he did not see any possibility or danger of an eventual attack

against us by the Greek army and was in agreement with my opinion that the dispatch of the Yugoslav division to Albania was not necessary.

The Yugoslavs were furious when I communicated to them that, not only we, but also the Soviet comrades and Stalin personally did not consider the dispatch of their division in order, but nevertheless, they «retreated» and, temporarily, said no more about this. The «concession» was made, because both the Yugoslavs and their agents still thought that they had everything going their way and matters would proceed as they had foreseen.

Hence, we were left to await the vicious attacks which the 8th Plenum of the CC of the Party would make upon us.

A black stain on the history of our Party

The leadership in Belgrade and their agents in our ranks based great hopes and aims on the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA. There they aimed to crown the plot they had been working on for many years for the final subjugation of the CPA, to put our Party in such a position that it would endorse «itself», «with its own mouth» what Tito and company dictated. Above all, the leadership in Belgrade aimed that the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA would create that situation in which, as soon as the signal was given, our Party would be obliged to accept and sign the «unification», or more correctly, the annexation of Albania by Yugoslavia. After this, according to the Titoites, everything would be settled easily: our Central Committee, «of its own free will», would put to the People's Assembly «its proposal for the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia», the deputies «would do what the Party told them» and, willingly or not, would raise their hands in approval. The ceremonies would take place full of «enthusiasm» and «joy» and the world would learn the great

news that «Albania, of its own will and on its own insistent demand, has become part of Yugoslavia».

Whether the others would be astonished at, would rejoice over or object to this news, would no longer matter to Tito. With our «decisions» in his hands, he knew that he would be able to prevent anyone who might raise any opposition to taking any action.

In order to make this «beautiful dream» of Tito's a reality, first of all, the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA must at all costs first reject the former line, the defenders and appliers of it, and adopt the «new» pro-Yugoslav line, the line of «unity and fraternity»! The Yugoslav leadership did not send or even ask permission for any of its representatives to take part in this Plenum. Everything was left for us to do «ourselves» with the aim that they would have «clean» hands in regard to what was to take place. But the truth is that, while withdrawing to the background themselves, the Yugoslav leaders launched their agents into activity, of course, instructing and guiding them in every step.

One of the main orientations which the Yugoslavs gave Koçi Xoxe and company at these moments was to display caution in the direct attacks which they would make against the main comrades of our leadership. This is the reason why the open attack was concentrated, at first, on Nako Spiru and two or three people around him, while in regard to the others, and especially me, they were reserved and did not come out openly. This was the diabolical tactic of taking the Albanian castle step by step, by stages, indeed, if possible, by deceiving some in order to launch them into the attack against the remainder. The Yugoslavs proved to be past masters of conspiracy, especially in the manner in which they were to operate against me.

The very development of events had put them in such a vortex that now, in the interests of their final plan, they were obliged to «retain» me by all means in the leadership and, indeed, to retain my «friendship» at a time when, for them, I should have been eliminated as early as 1944! This was the only

way in which their plan for the usurpation of Albania could be achieved without rifts, without suspicions, without objections and opposition, both from our Party and the Albanian people and from the world abroad, communist and non-communist. Otherwise, if in the suitable circumstances created for any sort of crime in November and December 1947, the attack were concentrated openly upon me and I were removed from the duties with which I had been charged, or if this were impossible, if I were wiped out, then the Yugoslav plan of usurpation would have been placed in the dock. The annexation would immediately have been linked with the preliminary attack upon and elimination from the scene of the General Secretary of the Party, the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the Albanian Army, and automatically the crime would have become more than evident. The leadership in Belgrade would have been faced with the grave and irrefutable accusation that it annexed Albania through a coup d'état by means of a plot and a hideous crime. This would bring them irreparable damage inside and, especially, outside Yugoslavia.

In Belgrade they calculated this well. Therefore, contrary to their long-standing desire to remove me from the scene as quickly as possible, contrary to the brutal impatience of Koçi Xoxe to seize all the reins as quickly as possible, the Yugoslav leadership was obliged «not to touch me» and «not to remove me» from the posts which I held for the time being, until the linking of Albania with Yugoslavia had become a *fait accompli*.

On this account, however, the problem presented many dangers for the conspirators of Belgrade, therefore, all their attention was concentrated on keeping me under surveillance by their agents and in complete isolation, on the creation of such a situation in which, while officially I would be General Secretary of the Party, in fact, I would have no power, either in the leadership of the Party, or in the Party as a whole, where the organizational secretary, the Yugoslav agent Koçi Xoxe, would do as he pleased; officially, I would be Prime

Minister, too, but in fact, the state power would be manoeuvred and directed by the Co-ordination Committee or Commission in Belgrade; officially, I would be Commander-in-Chief also, but in fact, our army would be directed by a Unified Command with J. Broz Tito as the Commander-in-Chief. In brief, the chiefs of Belgrade had to keep me in my former posts at those moments as a very effective disguise to legalize and conceal from the public the terrible crime they were preparing against Albania. Afterwards, everything would be easily settled: the UDB of Ranković, the counterpart of Koçi Xoxe in Belgrade, had become masters of the most hideous crimes from the elimination of somebody without a trace to pinning of a high decoration precisely in that place where a little earlier those same hands prepared to plunge the dagger or the bullet.

I shall never forget those difficult times when, in complete isolation and convinced I was in the centre of the attack, I was obliged, among other things, to stand up to the endless provocations of Tito's emissaries and their agents.

During those days Koçi Xoxe, in particular, operated with all his ability as a conspirator to compel me to act in accord with the interests of the leadership in Belgrade. On one of these days Xoxe, swarthy, short, podgy, with bulging eyes like those of a frog, came to me and with his cynical smile said:

«We must put out a magazine of friendship with Yugoslavia, because it has great importance, especially at these moments. You should write a warm leading article about our vital relations with the Yugoslav friends, about their aid, and especially about the contribution of the Comrade Marshal.»

He went on to give me some «guidelines» on how the magazine should be and what my article should contain and from all he said I understood what was the problem worrying him and those who had given him the «guidelines»: the Yugoslavs needed my article to have it as a «certificate of good behaviour» for Yugoslavia and Tito.

Making a cool assessment of the grave situation which had been created for us, as well as of the extremely delicate and difficult problems we had to solve, I «agreed» to the publication of the magazine and to write the article which he sought from me. Xoxe's «magazine» eventually came out (in November 1947, I think), including my article, in which, in very general terms and with the odd «fact» from the first years of the war, I pointed out the links and friendship between our parties and countries.

However, even with this, the Yugoslavs and their agents were satisfied: the important thing for them was that the General Secretary of the CPA should write even one good phrase, even in completely general terms, about Tito's Yugoslavia, as a safe-conduct pass for the annexation.

Meanwhile, in our Political Bureau the problems were simmering and, time after time, cautiously but insistently, I told Koci Xoxe that we must rely not on the Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers only, but must also inform the comrades of the Plenum of the Central Committee and the other main cadres of the state.

«In no way!» objected the «organizational man». «The comrades should not be informed because they will make a mess of things. We should go into matters thoroughly in the Bureau, consult with the Yugoslav friends and call the Plenum together when everything is ready.»

«It would be better if we discussed matters quietly with the comrades, or at least some of them», I told him. «They have their own opinion, they know the situation where they work and their judgement would be of great assistance in arriving at the most accurate and correct conclusions.»

«Organizationally, that would be a breach of the rules!» objected Koci Xoxe categorically. «We must not bring things out prematurely. There are only seven or eight of us in the Bureau and we can't agree, let alone if we introduce others. The Plenum will dance to the tune of the Bureau only when the Bureau comes to one opinion. Otherwise, the Plenum

becomes a mess and it manoeuvres us instead of us manoeuvring the Plenum.»

It was impossible to convince him that the manner in which we were acting was a grave mistake with serious consequences. Like the Yugoslav leadership, Koçi Xoxe had alien Trotskyite and anti-party views about the Party and even about its Central Committee. For him, too, the base of the Party and the Central Committee itself was «the mob», was «the clique» which must do what the «top leadership», the Bureau, and especially «the strong hand» in the Political Bureau, Koçi Xoxe himself, told them. This concept of the Party was more suitable to the Titoite plan of the usurpation of Albania, because in this way, according to them, by having the Bureau with them, they would have the whole Central Committee and indeed, the whole Party «with them».

Another measure, which Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo, etc., instructed by their master, Aleksandar Ranković, took at this period, had to do with stepping up the psychological pressure by means of surveillance, etc., over all the links of the Party and the organs of the state. Although such anti-Party, Trotskyite methods had long been used by Koçi Xoxe in secrecy, now, on the eve of the Plenum, they became the only form of «work». The threats and blackmail were quite open. The suicide of Nako Spiru, the violation of the most elementary organizational rules in the Political Bureau and the Central Committee, the arbitrary dismissal from their functions of a number of comrades for «anti-Yugoslavism», indiscriminate arrests, the great influx of Yugoslav militarymen, the pressures and threats «from above» for even the slightest attempt to argue with the Yugoslav technicians in regard to the work, the loud propaganda that was made of everything Yugoslav, etc., etc., were creating great psychological pressure and a grave atmosphere everywhere. In this same spirit, in order to prepare and work on the cadres of the Party in advance, at the end of December 1947, Koçi Xoxe delivered a speech to a meeting of activists, called in the Party School,

where he was supposed to deliver a lecture, but in fact, presented the whole platform of the Yugoslavization of Albania. This disgusting speech, prepared by the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana, was also to comprise the platform of the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, a number of elements of the CC of the CPA, the organs of the state and of the army, like Xhoxhi Blushi, Nesti Kerenxhi, Pëllumb Dishnica and others, were worked on intensively and secretly in order to totally implicate them, too, in the plot. They were instructed in detail in what they had to do and at the beginning of February 1948 the Yugoslavs judged that everything was ripe: the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA was summoned and began its proceedings.

From the moment the proceedings opened, the majority of the comrades of the Central Committee were confronted with a «new rule»: although the Plenum was summoned over problems of very great political importance, it had not been considered «reasonable» to present any report! A so-called conclusion of a meeting of the Political Bureau was read to them and, to their «astonishment», the organizational secretary of the Party, Koçi Xoxe, did the reading! It was quite obvious that the General Secretary of the Party had been pushed aside. Why?! Automatically, everything was linked with the «conclusions» which Koçi Xoxe read. Although my name was not mentioned there, it was made clear to all that I stood behind «the anti-Yugoslav clique» of Nako.

There is no need to speak here about the content of these «conclusions», because I would be repeating all that I wrote above when Zlatić presented Tito's accusations to us.¹ The only difference had to do with the changing of the pronouns and the person of the verbs: from «you have violated the spirit of the agreements» it had become «we, under the pressure of Nako Spiru, have violated the spirit...», from «your

¹ See pp. 362-373 of this book.

anti-Yugoslavism» it had become «the anti-Yugoslavism of our comrades...», etc., etc.

Immediately after the «conclusions», which completely disorientated and shocked the comrades, the discussion began. Measures had been taken to ensure that everything would go like «clockwork», moreover, apparently, without «pressure» and «dictate» from the Bureau! The «claque» — Nesti Kerenxhi, Pëllumb Dishnica, etc., took the floor. In two words they expressed their indignation over «those who have damaged our relations with the Yugoslav brothers», expressed their «solidarity with the measures to strengthen these relations» and, after this, their «free will» led them to other paths: the attacks and accusations from purely personal positions against Nako Spiru and «the clique around him» burst out. Precisely this was the main mission with which these elements had been charged by Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo. That is, they had to distract the spirit of the discussion away from the main problems which presented themselves about Albanian-Yugoslav relations, because if they were to dwell on them at length, there was the risk that, willy-nilly, the truth might come to light. Hence, from the first session of discussion, instead of saying whether or not the accusations of the Yugoslav leadership against our leadership were correct, whether or not our draft-plan was «autarkic», etc., etc., the Plenum took another course: everything was centred on «biographical investigations» about one or the other, on unheard of accusations and concocted slanders, on competing to see who could bring up most facts about what Nako or this or that person had said in such and such a year, in such and such a place, to such and such a person.

In order to put the seal of approval on this unhealthy spirit, Koçi Xoxe got up and in his contributions to the discussion and endless interventions he related tales with the same zeal that is shown for swapping yarns in cafés. In order to make his speech «interesting», one of those who took part in the discussion was saying that nothing else could be ex-

pected from Nako because «he was a son of a bourgeois and behaved with Albania like his father with the 'Stamless'¹ in Durrës». Immediately after this, Xoxe jumped up and said to the Plenum:

«That's just how he behaved, but those comrades who permitted him to do so must also bear the blame. He did not get away with these things with me. You know what I did to him once? I caught him in the corridors of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

'What are you doing here,' I demanded in a loud voice.

'I've come to talk with you,' he replied.

'Get out and don't let me see you here again, you've no right to set foot in the Ministry of Internal Affairs!' I told him.

'I'm a member of the Political Bureau,' the scoundrel replied without the slightest shame.

'Whoever you are,' I said to him, 'the Ministry of Internal Affairs is not the place for conversations but for other work. However, if that's what you've come for, then stay!' That's what I did to him,» concluded Xoxe, laughed for a moment and then became serious again.

«If we had closed the door to him everywhere then he would not have done all those evil things against us. Let the comrades speak for themselves and make criticism and self-criticism.»

Here I mentioned only one instance, but the Plenum was full of such things from beginning to end. And all these «tales» were incorporated in an absurd manner as «anti-party», and especially «anti-Yugoslav» manifestations. This «anti-Yugoslavism» was portrayed as «anti-Marxism» and «anti-socialism» and even «anti-Sovietism». It was said that to be opposed to close relations, opposed to links with Yugoslavia, means to be «anti-socialist, anti-Marxist, anti-Party, anti-

¹ Albanian tobacco and cigarette commercial-industrial shareholder company created in 1925.

Albanian» — all the «antis». This villainous manner of presenting the issue brought about that the judgments of many comrades who, in essence, were not bad at all, had no anti-party tendency, were led into errors and saw matters from this angle. Indeed, when some comrade spoke about the work in general, Koci and his henchmen immediately interrupted:

«If you have something to say, speak concretely!»

Naturally, there was plenty to be said «concretely» about Nako Spiru and his circle, because in their lives and activities they had permitted themselves grave mistakes and violations. In particular, the unhealthy ambition of Nako, his tendency and efforts to monopolize affairs, to emerge as the big shot everywhere, to gather around himself a suite of «chosen» people, and «intellectual élite» ready to do whatever Nako told them, these mistakes were known to us and we had criticized them continuously.

In their contributions many comrades brought up new facts in these directions and many of these facts were well based. One such fact was the attempt of Nako Spiru, even after he was removed from his duties in the Youth Organization, to treat the organization as his «personal contingent», as a «detachment» in the service of his ambitions. He had made similar efforts to get control of the Trade Union Organization and the Women's Organization. On his own initiative he gave these organizations «directives» and «orientations» which set them to the course of separation from the Party, just as he did with the Youth Organization.

One of the comrades said: «Nako came to us and said:

'Look what the Youth Organization is doing! It is producing ministers, while the Party and the trade-unions are producing nothing.'»

There were many similar examples of the monopolization of work, arrogance and conceit to be found in Liri Belishova and Mehmet Shehu, also.

We had frequently criticized these elements for all these things, and if the 8th Plenum was to meet for the examination of these mistakes and alien manifestations, this would

be more than normal. However, the 8th Plenum had not been summoned for this. Moreover, at this Plenum these shortcomings and weaknesses were not only inflated, added to and «elaborated on» in an incorrect manner, but were arbitrarily employed to prove that there lay «anti-Yugoslavism». I could never reconcile myself to this «conclusion» arrived at for premeditated purposes through behind-the-scenes manoeuvres. The fact is that Nako and his comrades had had frictions and contradictions with the Yugoslavs, but in the instances that I knew of, I had been in agreement with them. As was clearly proved later, and as some admitted in meetings, in the final analysis they had not opposed the Yugoslavs from a principled basis and for principled aims, but had opposed the pressures and crooked aims of the Yugoslavs for their own ulterior motives. In all this distorted course which events took, it was quite obvious that following the attack on the «clique» of Nako Spiru, the turn would come for the attack on the other sound comrades of the Party. Though not always directly, Koçi implied that the whole responsibility for the things Nako had done rested on me. He stated openly that Nako did what he did, since he had the support in the Bureau of the General Secretary. The things which it was not suitable for him to say himself were said by his lackeys, Pandi Kristo, Kristo Themelko, Tahir Kadare, Pëllumb Dishnica, Gjini Marku and others.

The terrain was being prepared for the final attack. Several times the Plenum was told insistently:

«Don't concentrate only on the group of Nako, take your criticism of the leadership further, because it has great responsibility!»

To the chagrin of Koçi Xoxe, however, attacks against me did not occur. Then, Pandi Kristo got up and made a «personal» proposal:

«Let us not repeat what has happened to us in the past by protecting the leadership from criticism. In the leadership there are comrades who have made major mistakes and they should be hauled over hot coals. I propose that we postpone

the proceedings for one or two days for the comrades to reflect and prepare themselves.»

Everybody understood that the request was aimed against me, first of all. However, on that plane to which they had guided the discussions, that is to accusations of arrogance, crudeness, megalomania, rumour-mongering, unhealthy ambition etc., it was difficult even for Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, let alone the other comrades of the Party to make anything stick on me. In my life as a communist and a citizen I had never permitted such manifestations. From this aspect even the «personal file», which Koçi Xoxe had opened on me, was certainly quite blank. Thus, even when the discussion recommenced the agents of Belgrade waited in vain for any «fact» against me.

Nevertheless, their insistence had its effect. The doubt was created that «there was something wrong with me».

During all the days of the Plenum, although *de jure* I was General Secretary of the Party, I hardly made two or three comments. The atmosphere was loaded against me. «General Koçi» as «the saviour of the Party» seemed as if he had the Plenum as his battalion and gave it orders to do what he wanted and said. I avoided intervening and facing the comrades with certain questions and facts that were simmering in my head. I thought it was neither the time nor the atmosphere. The slightest haste or tactical mistake might lead to the sacrifice of everything, and my worry was not that I would be sacrificed personally. My concern was the fate of the Party and Albania. Everything was balanced on a knife-edge.

Without dwelling any longer on the mass of accusations, slanders and «tales» which were spun in the Plenum, I have to say that at the end of this Plenum the Yugoslav's theses triumphed. A number of elements in the service of the Yugoslavs, such as Nesti Kerenxhi, Xhoxhi Blushi, etc., were arbitrarily co-opted to the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. The course of «economic union» with Yugoslavia was legalized, the draft five-year plan was rejected, the former line

of the Party was rejected. The terrain was prepared for further action. At the end of the proceedings, the question of the resolution came up. I expressed the opinion that a group should be set up to formulate the resolution which should be examined in the Bureau and that the Plenum should be summoned to discuss it and give it final approval.

«When do you envisage we should meet?» someone asked.

«The work will begin immediately, but a certain time will be needed,» I explained, «because, as you see, the problems are very complicated.»

«Within a few days, indeed within a very few days, we shall organize this work and meet. We're not going to let things drag out,» intervened Koçi arrogantly.

The conflict was even more apparent. The comrades went away convinced that the struggle within the leadership was continuing, except that now only the final clash lay ahead. Who would triumph?!

Immediately after the 8th Plenum the meetings of activists and conferences to «inform», «explain» and engage the base in the struggle against the hostile activity of Nako Spiru, etc., were commenced. They had deliberately brought into the meetings of activists those elements who had personal «accounts» to settle with Nako and his comrades. The anti-Party explosion became even more grave. Koçi and his whole band went to the meetings in Tirana like victors and I am making no mistake when I say that they were more like the infamous trials of the inquisition than meetings. Everything was presented black and grave. My name was completely eliminated. When it was mentioned on some occasion, it was simply alluded that I was the supporter of Nako Spiru and even the chief of the «anti-Party clique».

«General Koçi» was enjoying the fruits of his work. The former thick-head Xoxe (his pseudonym was Trashi [the Thick]), our ex-quartermaster of stores at Panarit, the sinister figure of the Bureau and the government, was now inflating himself like the frog in the fable. He opened and closed the

meetings of activists. Frequently, these meetings were turned into events like the noisy press conferences of the chiefs of the bourgeoisie: a question would be asked from the floor and answered there and then by the «competent» person. He was asked about everything, from the problems of the «plot» to the situation in Honolulu and how the elections would go in Italy!¹

Xoxe answered on the spot. He even defined the percentage of Italians who would vote for «Democracy», etc., etc.

I shall not dwell on this euphoria, but I want to point out that both in the Plenum and in the meetings of activists, Xoxe further elaborated his former hostile ideological and political views:

«The political party of the broad masses of the people, that's what the Front is,» declared Xoxe in Tirana and continued: «The people should see in the Front the force that waged the war, that brought about the unification and is carrying out the construction of the country... And for this reason, the Front must really organize, equip the people with conscience and prepare them morally and politically. All this should be done under the banner of the Front, in the framework of the Front.»

The forceful repetition of this anti-Marxist view at these moments had a clear purpose: according to Xoxe and to those who had taught him, our Party had done what it had to do and now it remained for the Front, that is the people, to proceed on that road which was opened, that is on the road of accepting, without opposition, any orientation which would be pronounced from «above».

At the same time, Koçi Xoxe found the way to give a strong warning about the reprisals which would be launched against those who opposed him. He linked this especially with

1 Koçi Xoxe's answers in such «meetings of activists» and conferences, as well as his contributions to the discussion are found in the minutes kept in the CAP.

the intelligentsia for whom he had always nurtured a visceral hatred.

«The question of the intellectuals,» he said, «is even more difficult, because the professors, doctors, engineers and others have been to school abroad. These intellectuals have never thought about the people, are not the sons of the people and have always wanted to cause splits in our country. In the case of Nako Spiru, who studied abroad and who managed to reach the leadership of our Party, we have the best example of this!» Xoxe concluded his address.

In fact, the warning had been given long before. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, under the direction of Koçi Xoxe, Nesti Kerenxhi etc., had opened files, not only on all our patriotic and revolutionary intellectuals, but on all those who dared to express any opinion which was not in conformity with the Yugoslav orientation. These elements were described as «men of the pen», «men of the school», and the club was to fall upon them. Ignorance and blind obedience — that was what the Yugoslavs and Koçi Xoxe needed in Albania.

This, then, in general outline, was the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA which, only a few months later, we were to describe quite rightly as a «black stain on the history of our Party».

For a moment this Plenum allowed the Trotskyite line of the Titoites to triumph. For a moment, the correct line, which our Party had pursued and defended, was rejected. For a moment both the Political Bureau and the Central Committee were disorientated. The skilled craftsmen of the workshop of the UDB in Belgrade, the military «delegates» and diplomats of Tito and their lackeys, the clan of Koçi Xoxe, managed to push aside the General Secretary of the Party and to load the «blame» for many mistakes on to him.

I say «for a moment», without by any means intending to underrate the great damage which this bitter event brought us, or to minimize that part of the responsibility for this which belongs to us. No, I say this because the indisputable

truth about this Plenum is that from the moments when it took place, the majority of the Central Committee of the Party saw and felt that a very grave mistake, a distortion with fatal consequences was being made, but matters had developed in such a way that, for the moment, the mistakes were elevated to a line.

Immediately after the Plenum the majority of the comrades, in one way or the other, openly expressed their reservations about and opposition to everything that was said and decided at the Plenum and the fact is that, despite the feverish efforts of the agents of Belgrade, the anti-Marxist spirit and line which the 8th Plenum made «official», did not extend in the Party and the life of the country. The other fact that, just three or four months after the 8th Plenum, in June 1948, our Party publicly denounced the anti-Marxist deviation of the Yugoslav leadership, also shows that the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA was a diabolical machination which was imposed on the Central Committee from outside. The 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, held in September 1948, and the 1st Congress of the CPA, held in November 1948, prove this even more clearly. Everything that had been said and decided at the 8th Plenum was unanimously and indignantly rejected. Obviously, only something which had had no real basis, something alien, imposed, false and hostile, could be rejected so quickly and with such indignation.

Nevertheless, it was to take some months to re-establish the truth. At first, the situation was extremely grave, complicated and frequently there seemed to be no way out.

Soon, however, we were to see an astonishing haste in the actions and efforts of the leadership in Belgrade and their agents to get the «Albanian question» over and done with as quickly as possible. Their pressure and insistence on deciding things quickly, there and then, made an impression on us and we were to sense in these actions the signs of a fear which accompanied their bearers, although we still did not know the reason for and the meaning of this unexpected

haste. We knew only that whoever is in a rush has a problem and in this rush might break his neck. Fortunately for the freedom of the people and independence of Albania, this was the fate and the finish of the anti-Albanian plot of Tito and his agents Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and company.

The Titoites' rush towards defeat

With the turn which events took immediately after the 8th Plenum, the possibility existed that our Albania, its war-time wounds still unhealed, would fall into the clutches of a new slavery. Now, however, this slavery was not to come through aggression, but by «request», by «official demand». And this shameful act for which neither our contemporaries nor the future generations would ever pardon us, was not to be carried out and signed by a puppet parliament like that of Zog, but the danger existed that it would be carried out by our own People's Assembly under unrestrained pressure and demagoguery, by «endorsing» the proposal of «the Central Committee of the Party».

This is where the work of Koçi Xoxe, the blind tool of the CPY and Tito, was leading, this was the course that events took after the notorious Plenum of February 1948!

In this situation my position was grave. I was in isolation and under ceaseless surveillance. But at no time did it cross my mind to surrender.

In the first place, **I had confidence in the Party and its Central Committee.** The first wave of Xoxe's damage would subside, the comrades would see matters with cooler heads and more objectively, would reflect and take the proper stand. This would occur especially at the moments when the comrades learned that Xoxe and company were preparing to make a gift to the «Yugoslav saviours» not of a piece of Vermosh

or a Shën-Naum¹, but of the 28 000 square kilometres of Albania! I had the unshakeable conviction that this would make matters completely and finally clear, that the people would see where the traitor and bandit General was leading the country.

This would be the signal for the general alarm. The comrades would say «no» and I, together with them and at their head would repulse the «proposals» of the Titoite leadership. This was the first pillar to which I clung firmly with complete conviction that our cause would not be lost.

Second, even if the Party were to make the tragic mistake of accepting the distorted decisions of a disorientated leadership, **the people would not accept this mistake.** For 7-8 years on end the Party and its leadership had guided, inspired and convinced the people that for us there is no cause more lofty and sacred than the freedom, independence and progress of the Homeland. This call had been made in the years of the war and repeated whenever necessary. The heroic deeds and wars of our people for freedom and independence, even when they did not have the Party, are renowned, let alone now when they had a leading staff which had emerged from the bosom of the people and had won recognition in the flames of the war for national liberation and for a people's democratic Albania. Many times the people had risen in defence of their rights. That is why the people whole-heartedly supported the speech of the representative of the new Albanian state at the Peace Conference in Paris in the summer of 1946. In that speech there is a powerful piece about our inviolable borders. Its attack was aimed in many directions. It was a warning about the aims and provocations of the Anglo-Americans and the Greek monarcho-fascists, but was also a hard knock for any other chauvinism, hence, for the Yugoslavs, too.

1 The Serbian Kralj Karadjordjević, together with Wrangel's Great-Russian bands, brought to Albania his agent — the bandit Ahmet Zog, who, as a great traitor to the Homeland, gave Yugoslavia Shën-Naum of Pogradec and Vermosh as a gift in return for this assistance.

I was convinced that if need be, the people would once again repeat with force and majesty their brilliant patriotic and fighting traditions and not allow the historical tragedies and injustices of the past to be repeated in 1947 and 1948.

These two fundamental factors (the Party and the people) were the two powerful pillars which gave me strength, which told me to act cautiously, with patience and maturity, convinced that when I was beside them and at their head there was no force which could conquer us. Very quickly it was to be proved how correct this judgment was.

The Yugoslavs were wrong at Berat, they were wrong again now and they would be wrong in the future, precisely, because, as I said above, they had a distorted anti-Marxist concept about the party and in the first place about where it has its roots, where the source of its successes and victories lies. They thought that with some backstage manoeuvres, with some agents at the head, with the isolation or liquidation of one or the other opponent, with some blackmail and threats, they could cancel out a whole war in which the people shed a great deal of blood, in which the workers, the peasants, the youth, the women and the freedom-loving progressive intellectuals saw the road to salvation and on which they based their aspirations for a better future.

In these notes and reminiscences I am obliged to speak about and describe those things which occurred around me, about the fact that for a long time I was alone against four or five in the Bureau, about the fact that even the Plenum of the Central Committee, as at Berat and now, was somewhat disorientated by the intrigues behind the scenes and the manoeuvres of the conspirators. Let us not forget that at Berat and at the 8th Plenum some people were co-opted in crooked ways in order to strengthen the crutches of the conspirators. All these things had a negative influence on our struggle. But the fact is that when matters were taken to the Party it showed itself solid, demanded a reckoning to the end and did not permit any violation of its glorious course

or any deviation of its future. Frequently rank-and-file members of our good people attribute to me certain merits which do not belong to me in coping with these enemies and analogous cases later. It should be understood clearly that if the enemies were unable to eliminate me at Berat and again and again later, this occurred not so much because they were afraid of me simply as a person, but rather because they were afraid of the people, of the Party and of the National Liberation Army with which we had linked ourselves in the war through a correct line, worked out and applied, not by one head, or by five or six people, but by the whole Party which was inspired by Marxism-Leninism, by all those cadres, communists or not, who gave their lives willingly. And it could not have been otherwise: tens of thousands of partisans had not fought against one slavery to enter another; the working class could not relinquish its leading role which it had won with bloodshed and sacrifice; the poor peasants did not fight to give the aghas their land, their sweat and their votes again, as Sejfulla Malëshova and others like him wanted; our patriots and intelligentsia could not accept the absurdities of the «proletarian» mind and heart of Koçi Xoxe who demanded that the glorious names and figures of Skanderbeg, Naim Frashëri and others like them be forgotten and wiped out.

No, our Party and people would not and did not allow the vital victories, which the Albanian people had sought for centuries and finally had achieved with torrents of blood and sweat, to slip through their fingers.

Besides these two fundamental factors, I also bore in mind that we were living in other times. We were living in the time of Lenin and Stalin, in the time when socialism was being built in a series of countries, when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by Stalin and the communist parties of other countries were in existence, when the Information Bureau had been created, etc. Our Party was not a member of the Information Bureau, but since it was a communist party, recognized by the Comintern thanks to our struggle and efforts, I was convinced that if necessary, **the sister parties**

would come to our aid. I thought that it could not be only we who sensed and saw the truth about Tito, and I was not mistaken. True, the stands and actions of Tito were expressed more openly and savagely in our country, since he considered us «small» and thought he could gobble us up more easily, but I had the belief that the others could not be asleep and were not blind. We had some signs and signals in this direction. I had received the first signal immediately after I had informed Stalin about the dispatch of the Yugoslav division. Stalin's reply was «No». He said nothing about Tito or the leadership of the CPY, but from his reply that, «We do not see any immediate threat from outside and hence the dispatch of the Yugoslav division does not seem reasonable to us», I understood that there must be disagreements between the CC of the CPSU and the CC of the CPY. Even more important, from Stalin's reply I understood that our correct opposition would not be in vain.

As I said above, I summoned Savo Zlatić and Kuprešanin and told them that we did not consider it reasonable that the division should come and that for this we had also consulted with the Soviet leadership. They were soured and furious, but they had to «accept» our refusal, like it or not. It is not difficult to understand why this «retreat» occurred. This is the manoeuvre of aggressors of all times. They «give way» to the extent that is necessary, with the aim that after they blind your eyes they will hurl themselves upon you with all their fury. If they were to arrogantly insist on the dispatch of their division to Korça, then the opinion that «the Yugoslavs want to occupy us» would become more evident and this would undoubtedly lead to opposition and matters could become badly complicated for them.

After the 8th Plenum, when they thought that the terrain was prepared for a further advance, they took another step: they decided that we should break off any contact or possibility of consultation with the Soviet comrades.

Zlatić came to me one of those days, «congratulated» me on the «success» of the Plenum and said:

«You did well that you rejected the autarkic five-year plan. Now you will go ahead more easily with the one-year plan. We will give you everything, because it is a joint plan.»

I was sure that he had something in his mind that had brought him to me. I waited for it to come out.

«Now,» he continued, «together with the five-year plan many things connected with it will be dropped, too. Now that Nako and his ideas are gone, get rid of everything else from his spirit, from the suggestions, advice and the advisers who taught him that business!»

«To whom are you referring?» I asked him.

«Please don't misunderstand me,» he replied, «I say that the friendship between us and the Soviet Union should be as strong, long lasting, steel-like, honest and internationalist as possible. This is Tito's instruction, too. But now that you have quite rightly rejected Nako's autarkic plan, what are the Soviet comrade advisers going to do in Albania? They will be hurt and quite rightly so. Nako led them up a blind alley...»

He went on and on about the fact that «you have no further need» for the Soviet advisers, «possibly you should let the technicians stay and work», but without «us interfering with them, or they with us».

«Is this Tito's instruction, too?» I asked in such a tone that Zlatić found it difficult to distinguish whether I was asking sincerely or with sarcasm.

«Comrade Tito gives general instructions,» he replied diplomatically. «Friendship is the general consideration. But in the concrete instance what I say comes within the framework of friendship.»

On this occasion Zlatić «protected» Tito, but some months later, in the self-criticism which Kristo Themelko was to make at the 11th Plenum, amongst many other things he testified as follows:

«When I went to Belgrade in March, at the reception which Tito reserved for me, he spoke to me about the Soviet advisers and asked me: 'How do you get along with them?' Influenced as I was by Koçi, Pandi and the Yugoslavs,» con-

tinued Themelko, «I told him, 'We are discussing whether we should send them away, because they interfere in our affairs.' Tito said: 'We put up the money and the others poke their noses in. This won't do.'»¹

This occurred precisely at the time when Zlatić, for his part, asked me to send the Soviet advisers away.

«Comrade Zlatić,» I replied, «I do not consider your judgement correct. If Načo 'blinded' the Soviet advisers, as you say, we will know how to find a common language with them. They are very necessary to us and we have not noticed any sign of discontent amongst them.»

«Nevertheless, you should look into this matter,» replied Zlatić. «Put it forward in the Bureau and listen to the opinion of the comrades...!»

The need for me to do this did not arise. The threads had been co-ordinated in advance, and at the first meeting of the Political Bureau, Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and Kristo Themelko said quite openly: the Soviet advisers should be sent away!

«Not because we don't like them, not because they are no good, but simply because we have no need for them!» said Pandi Kristo. «Moreover,» reasoned Pandi «profoundly» (he had not long begun to become something of an orator), «to keep these valuable Soviet advisers here, where there is no work for them, is not an act of kindness and gratitude to the Bolshevik Party and the beloved country of the Soviets. Their country has great need for them, while we are keeping them here without any need at all. Therefore,» he concluded, «I propose we should put the problem to the Soviet comrades in a fraternal way, explain to them why we are taking this step and tell them this is only for the time being! Later... we shall see...»

«Later,» I replied and looked Pandi right in the eye, «perhaps there will be no need for the Soviet ambassador in Tirana either!»

1 From the minutes of the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA. CAP.

«Oh, please! If you are opposed then say so, but without irony!» interjected Koçi Xoxe. «You always speak with irony. And you should bear in mind,» he crowed, «that the 8th Plenum put things in order and got rid of the enemies. You are offending us...»

«I don't want to offend you,» I said, «but it seems to me we are taking a bad step. To say that we have no need for the Soviet advisers means that we have no need for the advice of the Soviets, for their experience, for the great experience of that party and socialism in the Soviet Union!»

«Don't generalize quite simple things in this way!» Koçi Xoxe «defended» himself. «We are referring to a concrete matter, simply to that of the plan!»

I was convinced that this was not so. The problem went deeper. The demand of Zlatić and the Yugoslav agents led to that wrong anti-Soviet course on which the Titoite leaders had set out long ago.

Faced with the opposition of me, Hysni and Gogo, the remainder of the Bureau made a «retreat», but on condition that «in the coming days we shall thrash out this idea and decide it», as Koçi Xoxe said.

However, when more than anything else the Yugoslavs needed quiet and secrecy for the realization of their annexationist plans, certain circumstances made them rush their activity in regard to Albania. We still did not know these circumstances, but their haste began to become quite obvious.

Kristo Themelko, who had just returned from a trip to Belgrade, came to me and said:

«Even Tito received me, not to mention Comrades Tempo and Popović! They accompanied me all day! Our relations are warm again. I secured all the aid for the army and for defence. It had never crossed my mind that they would give us so much: weapons, equipment, clothing! They told me they would even maintain our army with food. Yugoslav engineering detachments will come to build roads and bridges and other strategic projects. They will fill the whole country with steel and concrete. And the important thing is that they

told me that all these things 'we shall include in the Yugoslav budget'»

He raised his head from his papers about «aid» which he had in front of him and was astonished when he saw that I was listening to him with complete indifference.

«Don't you believe me?» he asked. «Ask General Ku-prešanin and you will see!»

«Did they put anything else before you?» I asked him to imply to him that we had finished.

«Lots of lunches and dinners!» he said. «But apart from what I mentioned we did not speak about other problems.»

I got up from my chair in order to escape the annoyance he was causing me, but he said to me:

«Comrade Commander, I have some other things on my own behalf. That reply of the Soviets still remains unclear to me. It is my opinion, but what if we ask them why they do not agree to our accepting the Yugoslav division.»

«Stalin's reply is clear,» I said. «There's nothing more to clarify!»

«Oh, very well, but it seems to me that business is still bothering the Yugoslav comrades. What if we ask Moscow to reconsider their reply once more. Perhaps they will tell us to accept the division.»

«We gave the Yugoslavs our reply and if they are not clear let them ask Stalin themselves!» I replied curtly.

«That doesn't seem right to me. My opinion is we should repeat the request!»

I was not impressed so much with Themelko's request to ask Moscow again as with his expression used in and out of place «it's my opinion». I stayed to hear more.

From his «own opinion» he brought out very «interesting» proposals: the creation of a unified command, «if not for the whole army, at least for those forces which will operate together with the Yugoslav division, if we permit it to go to Korça»; especially «his» great desire for the union of Albania with Yugoslavia as quickly as possible in a federation (!) etc., etc.

«While I was in Belgrade this time,» he added in a hushed voice, «I learned a great secret from a very reliable source. Bulgaria is almost united with Yugoslavia. Their union is only a matter of weeks or months. My heart tells me, Comrade Commander, that we should not allow Bulgaria to leave us behind. For my part I say we should take the initiative first. Let us tell Tito to unite with us first and then with Bulgaria.»

«Shule has been wound up properly,» I thought very worried, but I controlled myself and asked him quietly, but with irony:

«Are all these things your own opinions?!»

«On my honour, they are my own opinions!» he «vowed».

«The proposals are very 'interesting'!» I told him. «Write them out just as you presented them to me and we shall raise them in the Political Bureau. Let us discuss them there!»

«I'll do that,» replied Shule, «but I mentioned them to you first in order to hear your opinion. They would be more sure of acceptance if we were to present them to the Bureau as our common proposals and desire.»

«In no way!» I told him. «Such a desire has never crossed my mind and, second, I have no reason to assume the 'merits' which belong to you! Write them out and present them yourself!»

No more than three or four days later, General Kuprešanin requested a meeting with me. I received him and from his first words he began to present, «on his own behalf», the same «desire» and proposals which Kristo Themelko had presented to me.

Right from the start I sensed that all this was organized and directed from afar, but I was astonished at the unexpected haste with which it was insisted that we should discuss and approve these proposals. My suspicions about this haste were even further increased when, two or three days after General Kuprešanin, Savo Zlatić came to me.

He too began to speak about the «new spirit» in the relations between our two countries, about the «unprecedented

extension» of economic and cultural exchanges, of joint projects and plans (which had remained only on paper) etc., etc.

«As you see yourself,» he continued, «many problems have been created for us which we must cope with together. However, for this neither the good will nor the desire of both sides that the work should proceed well are sufficient. Like it or not, many difficulties arise. We have considered the matter thoroughly and judge that the conditions have matured for a big and decisive step. Our countries should be united as quickly as possible!»

«How should they be united?» I asked him.

«In the framework of a federation!» he replied quite calmly. «For years you, we and the Bulgarian comrades have been in agreement about the creation of this federation. We think that now the time has come.»

«There has been talk at times about a federation,» I said, «but always in principle and as a problem of the future. We, for our part, have not discussed this problem, because it was not the time and the possibilities for it did not exist. For my part, I tell you that in our conditions especially, it is still not the time to raise this problem for discussion, let alone to decide it.»

«Our leadership judges that the time has come,» insisted Zlatić. «I want to tell you in confidence an extremely secret thing: the Bulgarian comrades have agreed to unite with Yugoslavia and the question of our union is a matter of weeks or at the most months. I have been friendly with you for a long time and in my heart I don't want Bulgaria to be the first to take the initiative. Why don't you take this step first? This would make our special relations more evident in the international arena!»

Shule came to my mind and I smiled to myself ironically. They were wound up, I thought, not only with the ideas, but even with the identical words and expressions. Meanwhile Zlatić was watching me carefully and asked:

«What do you think about it?»

«I am listening,» I said, «carry on!»

«Don't take this with fear and reservations! This is a step which will certainly be taken, if not today, tomorrow. The union of our two peoples will immediately smooth out all the difficulties which have arisen and never cease arising. The thing is who will be the first to take the initiative? Comrade Tito instructed me that it would be best if the proposal came from you. This would eliminate any suspicion that we allegedly want to include Albania in the federation.»

«Why? Isn't what you propose inclusion?» I asked quietly.

«Why do you speak in this way?!» he said as if offended. «Perhaps I expressed myself badly! We want the union, but we do not want people to accuse us of doing this on our own behalf.»

«Then are they to accuse us of doing this on our own behalf?!» I retorted immediately.

Zlatić went pale and the words stuck in his throat. I offered him a glass of water, he swallowed a gulp and tried to smile:

«I have some trouble with my throat,» he «excused» himself. «However, it seems that we do not easily agree with each other. You judge by my words; please judge by the essence. The matter is not that we do not want it, but that the thing will be done more easily if you make the proposal. We will immediately approve the proposal and it will all be done without problems. They have no reason to accuse you, because, as the small country you are, no one will think that you have made Yugoslavia a part of your country. In our case it is different.»

«Have you consulted with the Soviet leadership about this step which you suggest to us?» I asked him.

«No!» he replied all agitation. «This is a problem between our two countries, between our two leaderships. When we have completed everything then we shall inform the Soviet comrades. However, you did well to ask me this. I have instructions from Comrade Tito that you, too, should maintain the same stand as we do. It is not good for us to worry the Soviet

comrades about something that we have not agreed upon between ourselves. I must tell you that we do not agree with the way in which you acted in connection with our division. However, for the sake of our friendship with the Soviet Union, we are withdrawing. But, if something occurs with the Greeks, let the proper person bear the responsibility. You should keep these two things in mind and please don't misunderstand us: first, the Soviet Union is truly our great friend, but it is far away, and in case of an aggression, it cannot come quickly to your aid; second, the Soviet Union as a big country must conduct a major international policy. On account of a very major interest, it may not be able to intervene in the case of an attack against you, may be obliged to accept the sacrifice of your country!»

«Clear!» I said curtly, in a serious tone. «These things you put before me are the opinions of your leadership, are they not?»

«Of course, they are the opinions of our leadership!» replied Zlatić.

«And of course you have brought them to us in writing!»

«No. Whether they are presented in writing or orally is of no importance. I transmitted them to you quite clearly. Between friends it is not important whether things are presented orally or in writing. The important thing is that we find a common language.»

I felt the situation was reaching its climax. Tito's three envoys, wound up with the same «proposals» and the identical phrases, might be followed by others and exert their pressure systematically. Now the stand of our Political Bureau had decisive importance. After what occurred at the 8th Plenum our Bureau was on the side of Koçi Xoxe, both in content and in orientations. Gogo, Hysni and I were in a minority. This situation compelled me to keep cool, to manoeuvre with care so as to resist the great danger which was knocking at the door. At this time certain other doubts arose in connection with the Yugoslavs. Why were they insisting that we should not consult with the Soviet comrades?

Could the relations between sister parties and socialist countries be called friendly and normal when they keep secrets from one another?! Apparently something is not going well between them, I judged. The monstrous judgments that Zlatić pronounced in connection with the stand of the Soviet Union in case of an aggression against us further increased this suspicion of mine. These things were not simply suppositions of Tito and company. On the one hand they were pressure and blackmail to intimidate us, but in essence they also expressed Tito's hostile stand and assessment towards the great Soviet Union and Stalin's foreign policy. Only enemies could have and express such base opinions about the Soviet Union. But this was still just my own reasoning. From the Soviet embassy we had no signal, either for better or for worse. We had to cope with everything alone. Without delay, that is, without letting matters get worse, I demanded an urgent meeting of our Political Bureau.

«These days,» I said in substance, «three comrades, Shule, General Kuprešanin and Savo Zlatić have come, one after the other, asking us to propose the union of Albania with Yugoslavia. Obviously this is a step which cannot be taken lightly. The matters which they put before us cannot be solved hastily without consulting with the Party, the government and the people, without thrashing them out and discussing them in detail from every point of view. The request which is made to us cannot and must not be taken as the desire of one or the other individual. This is a major political and state problem of principle. I listened to the three comrades, but from what they told me many things remain obscure. For this reason I think that, before we discuss the matter in the Bureau, we should send Comrade Tito a letter asking him to explain to us more extensively, officially and in writing why and how he sees this step possible.»

«What if we listen to Shule here and try to clear things up,» put in Koçi Xoxe «innocently». «Perhaps it won't be necessary to write a letter to Comrade Tito.»

«What Shule told me was his own opinion,» I replied to

Xoxe. «We can't take the desires of Shule as a message from the Yugoslav leadership. Am I not right, Comrade Kristo?»

«Yes, of course, it was my opinion,» replied Shule blushing. «But I'm ready to explain to you anything that was unclear!»

«I instructed you to present your proposals in writing,» I said. «You neglected this. Likewise, neither Kuprešanin nor Zlatić presented anything official. We are the Political Bureau of an independent party and we represent the interests of a sovereign state, therefore, in regard to such a problem we cannot base ourselves on what one or the other says, however trusted the comrades may be. Let us send a letter to Comrade Tito to ask him to explain to us how they see the road of unification, to explain also why they asked that the proposals should come from our side, why we should unite 'irrespective of what Bulgaria does', why they consider consultation with the Soviet comrades unnecessary, etc. I consider this a normal thing and more than necessary,» I continued. «I think that Comrade Tito himself will be pleased that we want his personal judgment to have as a basis for taking a decision on such a question!»

While I was speaking the faces of Xoxe, Themelko, Pandi Kristo, Nesti Kerenxhi and others sometimes looked black, sometimes went pale from the anger simmering within them. Behind my words they saw a manoeuvre that was taking the initiative from their hands. But they had no way to oppose what I presented. Willy-nilly, they «agreed» that the discussion should be postponed until Tito's reply came.

After so many months of the savagest pressure and blackmail, for the first time I felt I could breathe a little more easily. On such a delicate and discrediting matter as the demand for the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia, Tito would hardly make so bold as to put the demand in writing. He might send us another hundred emissaries, all to convince us that they came from the same source, they might speak with identical words, but these would no longer carry any weight. The point of Archimedes had been found and estab-

lished: we would discuss the matter in the Bureau only after Tito's official reply came in writing!

I was convinced that this meant: Never! The balance was tipping in our favour. About 15 or 20 days later, when everything indicated that the threat to us was being overcome, an unexpected announcement seemed to me to overturn everything: Savo Zlatić had arrived in Tirana with an extremely important message from the Yugoslav leadership and sought an urgent meeting with us.

We received him as soon as possible¹. As far as I remember Hysni Kapo and I were there from our side and from the Yugoslav side, Zlatić, Krajger, a planning «specialist» as a sort of secretary of the Co-ordination Commission, and I am not wrong in listing Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, too, on the Yugoslav side.

Zlatić's uncommonly glowering face and even more the cold and haughty look which he gave me at the moment we met made my heart sing. I understood that Tito had not dared to commit the crazy act of demanding the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia in writing, over his own signature. I was still more convinced that the Yugoslavs were on the downward path when Zlatić produced some papers and began to communicate:

«I am instructed to present to you the judgments and most recent new proposals of the Yugoslav leadership! Our leadership insists on the fact that the organizational forms of our relations do not respond to the content and essence of the relations created. Practical experience has led us to a combined economic unit and the future difficulties in the construction of socialism will be more easily dealt with, if we put the economic union on sounder foundations. Any step which we take in this direction will make the solution not only of the economic problems, but all other problems, easier.»

Zlatić's obvious gloom and ill-humour were immediately reflected on the faces of Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo. Unfor-

¹ The meeting took place on April 10, 1948.

tunately for them, the «emissary» from Belgrade had reduced the rank of the demands. From «political union» he had come down to «economic union». Where would it end?!

Meanwhile, Zlatić continued his presentation of the «new» proposals: we should proceed with an economic plan and maintain common stands towards other countries; we should have a common system on economic, trade and financial questions; we should have the same methodology of planning; common laws; open borders, common passports; the same education system, etc.

«That means we should be like one state!» Koçi Xoxe suddenly took heart.

Zlatić gave him a savage and angry look and Xoxe immediately hung his head, all fear and embarrassment.

«No!» replied Savo. «That will be a later issue. Our leadership is not pleased with the explanations you demand about the proposal for unification. It seems that you have reservations. Very well, we are no longer repeating the request. The new proposals have to do with something in between. That is, for the time being we will appear as two states, but act as one state.»

I turned first to Koçi as if to make things «clearer» to him: «Comrade Zlatić is saying that formally we shall be separate states but in essence we shall be one with Yugoslavia. Am I not right, Comrade Zlatić?!»

«What I considered necessary I stated clearly!» he replied brusquely. «As for the remainder, hear what I shall continue to communicate. Our leadership thinks that the new step should be concretized in organizational forms with the creation of a committee in Belgrade and a co-ordination commission in Tirana. The committee in Belgrade will be headed by a Yugoslav minister and have an Albanian deputy minister. The co-ordination commission in Tirana will be headed by an Albanian minister and have a Yugoslav deputy minister. Obviously, the main new thing here will be the committee. It will be a joint organ of our two governments which will assume some of the competences and responsibilities of both

states. Hence, this committee will be the beginning of the future joint government. The co-ordination commission in Tirana will be linked with it. However, while the co-ordination commission will be engaged mostly with questions of the joint economy, the committee will also be engaged with other problems. Now what is needed is that we put all these things that I presented in a joint protocol so that everything will receive the official seal and be in order, also, from the standpoint of international law.»

«Have you brought a draft of this protocol?» I asked him.

«No,» he replied. «We shall formulate it here. It will be a simple matter. In it we will present ourselves as two states, but the links and accords which will be attached to it will make the existence of two states a formal question. This is the future, that is to say, the federation!»

Everything was clear. The Yugoslavs wanted to trap us, to lead us through the «protocol» to that same path on which they had failed by means of their proposal for union. However, their new manoeuvre no longer indicated strength and blackmail. Now it was more like a desperate attempt, a shot in the dark in the vain hope of «hitting the target». It was the moment for us to raise our tone:

«Comrade Zlatić,» I said, «we listened to the new proposals of your leadership and, of course, we shall think about them, discuss them and give you our reply. However, many of the things you said are obscure, even disturbing and excuse me for saying so, not correct on your part.»

«Please,» he said, «how do you mean concretely?!»

«You want us to take such a step which, in essence, is the union of our two countries, the amalgamation of our two states. You said this yourself. For this you want us to draft a protocol. Twenty days or so ago you presented to us demands which would have the same result for us, except that then it was to be done through a proposal which we should make 'from our side', but on your request. Now I want to ask you: are such actions normal in the relations between sovereign

states?! We sent Comrade Tito a letter asking him to explain to us how he saw and considered the question of the unification of our two countries. You did not send us a reply.»

«The proposals which I presented are the reply!» exclaimed Zlatić, making a slip, perhaps from his mad haste.

«If what you say is true, then the problem is extremely grave. You can call it what you like, but we take this as an attempt to face us with an accomplished fact. We have no reason to deceive one another. We sought clarification on 'why we should unite now' and did not seek a protocol in which we would sign the unification.»

«It is not a protocol for unification!» Sergej Krajger intervened. «It is a protocol for better regulation of the relations between our countries, especially in the economic field.»

«You remember the conversation we had three or four months ago on the question of the co-ordination commission,» I said to Krajger. «You said this commission would iron out any disagreement and would put everything in order. In any case, the commission was created. Later you came and complained to me that matters were not going well, because our ministries did not report to you on everything you required from them. I told you in a comradely way that I was not in agreement with your requests, but on your insistence I instructed the ministries that they should do this. And what resulted from this?! Our people were kept engaged on useless studies and projects. They were engaged more in compiling reports and information for you than on seeing to the questions of the economy. Now, if we allow the committee to be created in Belgrade, we will all have to turn into reporters and suppliers of information for that committee.»

«Everything is done for the best,» Krajger replied «gently», «and our aims are sincere. You should not deny our aid. You must understand that Yugoslavia is making sacrifices for you and, on the problems of aid, it treats you exactly like its own republics. But while with our republics everything is settled easily, with you, while you remain a separate state, willy-nilly, difficulties and disagreements arise.»

«Our orientation and concern», I told him, «has been to complete the obligations to and contracts with Yugoslavia, first of all. Indeed, we have accepted such links and organisms which any other state could hardly permit. One of them is the commission which you lead. And if matters are still not going well, don't seek the cause amongst us.»

«I am referring to the fact that disagreements arise because we are separate,» intervened Krajger. «Your department sees the problems in one way, the Yugoslav department in another way. Each side is concerned with its own interest. Let me give you some examples,» he said and made a sign to a third Yugoslav who, like a clockwork toy, quickly produced a piece of paper from his briefcase.

«Look what occurs,» said the Yugoslav raising his voice. «Your side makes demands which cannot be fulfilled. Take, for instance, tweezers. You have asked for 70 000 tweezers for a year! This is the limit! You have emptied the Yugoslav market of them!»

«There may be unreasonable requests!» I said to the Yugoslavs, «but I am unable to answer you about the tool you mention. In what branch of the economy is it used?!»

Unexpectedly, the tense atmosphere of the meeting relaxed for a moment. The interpreters began to speak with the Yugoslavs to clear up what this tool was. Koçi Xoxe was holding his head in his hands, while Zlatić was making crazy gestures: he was pulling out eyebrows with the tips of his fingers and trying to tell me something. Finally, the mystery was solved.

The interpreter started to explain to me: «The reference is to a piece of springy steel strip bent double which is used by women to pluck their eyebrows.»

It was not the moment to laugh, but to shout at them:

«Shame on you that you mention such crazy things!» I exploded at the Yugoslavs. «Our women and girls don't even know the name of the instruments you are talking about and they never think of plucking their eyebrows! They still have insufficient food, they have no clothes for their backs and shoes for their feet, while you complain to us that

we have allegedly emptied your market of eyebrow pluckers.¹ Keep them for yourselves. On my own responsibility I tell you not to bring a single pair to Albania!»

«You should not be angry. We brought this up as an example of the irregularities which are created. There are many like this,» and the Yugoslav continued to list them: «You have demanded so many tons of boot polish, so many thousand boot nails, so many million (I think about 7-8 million) pen nibs (!), so many thousand kilograms of beverage essence, etc., etc.»

«Astonishing! Extremely astonishing!» I said indignantly and turned to Pandi Kristo who was cowering in a corner like a shitty rabbit: «Did you order these things? Why do you need them?»

«Comrade Commander, you are quite right, but the Yugoslav comrades are right, too. We don't really need those things, but when we asked for some motors and equipment for the railway, the Yugoslav comrades of the plan suggested to us that we order these, too, because their market was full of them. They told us: 'They are very cheap, order them in the framework of the credit.'»

Surprisingly, even after this the Yugoslavs were not in the least shocked. On the contrary, Zlatić found the way out:

«It is not important who put them in the plan!» he explained. «The important thing is why these irregularities occur. They occur because we still act as two separate states. Everything will be settled if you approve our proposals!»

«Had you anything else to communicate to us?» I asked him.

«Nothing. If you are ready we can begin the drafting of the protocol,» Zlatić made bold to say in his haste.

«And why do you want that protocol?!» I asked, feigning ignorance.

1 In the book «Yugoslav-Albanian Relations» (1939-1948) published in Belgrade in 1949, Tito's men have not forgotten to «point out» even this fact. On page 205 (edition in the Albanian language), they complain that the Albanian side «has sent the Federal Planning Commission of the FPRY a request for 70 000 pairs of tweezers for plucking eyebrows.»

«To be in order in the future!» he replied there and then. «Some frictions, disagreements might occur. Without a protocol you might say 'we understood it this way' and we might say 'we understood it that way'. While a protocol is a document. We shall refer to it and let the responsibility lie with the proper person.»

«Look here!» I said. «You appreciate the importance of the protocol very correctly and I agree with you. But why do you not consider it correct to give us your opinions, comments and especially your proposals in documents, in writing?! You fired a barrage of them at us in November. I asked you to hand them to us in writing, but to this day you have not done such a thing. You came in December, made a whole lot of proposals, but once again orally. You came in February and March, and the same thing! We are awaiting a reply from Comrade Tito, but it does not come. Now, once again you make new proposals, but again orally. How are we to know that what you say is accurate?!»

«I transmit precisely the instructions of our leadership,» he said, looking disconcerted. «You are telling us openly that you do not believe us. Do you not believe me, or do you not believe the leadership of the CPY and Comrade Tito?»

«This is not the place for such questions!» I replied sternly in a frigid tone. «We are not discussing the content of the problems which you raised, but the way in which they are presented. We shall examine them only when you have given them to us in writing!»

With this the meeting came to an end. As he was leaving, Zlatić was about to say something more, but apparently decided against it. The others followed him out with their heads hanging. I remained alone with Hysni.

«Perhaps we'll have a big flare-up with them,» he said. «But you put them in their place. Let them consider carefully before they provoke another November. They should know that there comes a time when even our patience and calm come to an end.»

«Anything might happen,» I told him, «however, for some time I've noticed a surprising fear and confusion in all of them. I don't understand why they are rushing with such obvious chauvinist impatience to achieve the union at all costs. Nevertheless, we must be vigilant. For us everything is now clear. We shall respond to their attack with attack. There is no other way.»

The ignominious end

No more than two or three days after this meeting, an important event finally cleared up and enlightened us on everything: the first letter¹ of the CC of the CPSU addressed to the Yugoslav Titoite leadership reached us.

I read the letter right through without stopping to draw breath, and from the opening paragraphs I felt a joy and satisfaction such as I had rarely experienced in all my life. Calmly, with unshakeable arguments, the CC of the CP of the Soviet Union brought out the major mistakes and distortions in the line of the leadership of the CPY, its unrestrained nationalism and megalomania, and the course full of dangers and harmful consequences on which it was leading the Yugoslav peoples. Although our Party and country and our relations with the leadership of the CPY were not mentioned anywhere in the letter, it seemed to me as if every paragraph took account precisely of the things which had been occurring to us for years on end in connection with the Titoite leadership.

The whole letter was an indirect confirmation, also, of the correctness of the line of the CPA, was a refutation of all the endless criticisms, accusations, slanders and pressures

¹ This letter was sent to the leadership of the CPY on March 27, 1948.

which Tito and his «emissaries» had made against us for 6-7 years on end.

I was finally convinced that our cause was triumphing. Not only would the fierce conflict in which we were engaged with the leaders of Belgrade be resolved correctly, but more important, it would be resolved more quickly and without so many complications, battles and losses as if we were obliged to fight alone.

I summoned Hysni immediately, gave him the letter to read and saw that he, too, was filled with the same emotions, the same feelings as those I had experienced a little earlier. The time had come to breathe freely, the time had come for our Party and people to throw off that evil spirit and heavy burden which had hindered and threatened us for years.

«We are proved right! We are going to win. Long live the Party!» exclaimed Hysni with tears in his eyes, as soon as he finished reading the letter, and he embraced me.

«This historic letter of Stalin explains and clears up everything!» I told him. «Do you remember what we talked about a few days ago?! The Yugoslavs' haste and insistence on signing the unification seemed to us astonishing and incomprehensible. Now it is clear. Through their dirty manoeuvres and pressure they wanted to get the business with us over and done with quickly, because they were uneasy about their conflict with the Soviet comrades.»

«Have Koçi and Pandi read it?» Hysni asked me.

«No,» I replied. «They are not here. They have gone to the districts to propagate the 8th Plenum! As soon as they return I shall inform them.»

«Let us see how they receive the news...»

«Like a thunderbolt,» I said. «Nevertheless, it is still too early to analyse this historic letter in detail. We shall inform the other comrades of the Bureau, let them all read the letter and then we shall meet and discuss it.»

That same day or the following day, Kristo Themelko and Begir Balluku came to me in alarm:

«Comrade Commander,» they told me, «General Kupre-

šanin asked for a meeting with us and communicated very grave accusations to us. He instructed us to transmit them to you and we came immediately!»

«What is the General displeased about?» I asked.

«About everything!» exclaimed Kristo Themelko. «In the first place about the economy. He does not agree with your formulation that 'the Albanian economy is based on its own forces and also relies on the aid of Yugoslavia and the fraternal countries'. Kuprešanin calls this a violation of the agreement. He told me that we should not say 'the Albanian economy', but 'the joint Albanian-Yugoslav economic plans'.»

«Yes, yes!» I «encouraged» him. «Go ahead!»

«He told us that he is displeased that some time ago a director of a factory in Shkodra was arrested for hostile activity. He is of Yugoslav origin and on this account should not be touched!»

Themelko went on to list the other «accusations» of the Yugoslav General: the third «accusation» had to do with our foreign policy: the Austrian government had proposed to recognize the People's Republic of Albania and we had allegedly made a «fatal» mistake — we had not protested against this request of Austria! According to Kuprešanin, we would have protested and rejected the request because, first, Austria and Yugoslavia were quarrelling with each other over the question of a Slovenian minority and, second, how could Albania be recognized by Austria without the approval of Yugoslavia?!

The fourth «accusation» had to do with the housing policy of the Executive Committee of Durrës: some families of Yugoslav specialists had been shifted into new houses, because the zone of their former houses had been put at the disposal of the army!

«He was very annoyed!» concluded Themelko. «He listed these things one by one and communicated to us that in these conditions we could no longer collaborate in the military field!»

«And did you accept the 'accusations'?» I asked them.

«We took notes,» Themelko told me. «We were badly

shocked by what he said about our military relations. If they abandon the collaboration with us we are in trouble! Without their aid, how can we carry out all those plans in the army! So I asked him whether there was anything that displeased him in the army. He told us there was nothing.»

«Yes, there was, yes there was!» added Balluku. «Good seats are not reserved for the Yugoslav officers in the football stadium!»

«Oh, you are right, I forgot!» remembered Shule. «Some ignorant individual gave our officer friends ordinary seats for a football match. It could have been done deliberately, because the enemy keeps up such things.»

«Did Kuprešanin raise the question of tickets, too?!» I asked them.

«Yes, he did and he was indignant about it!» explained Shule.

«And how did the meeting end?!» I asked, controlling my anger with great effort.

«Like this! We begged him not to hold it against us, told him that we would correct the mistakes, and came straight to you. It is very disturbing!»

«Your stand is disturbing and incomprehensible!» I said sternly. «My remarks are addressed first, to you Kristo, as member of the Political Bureau, but also to you, Beqir Balluku, as chief of the General Staff of the army. You had no reason at all to listen to the Yugoslav General as soon as you realized that he was speaking to you about problems which do not pertain to him. However, after your first mistake you fell into the second. Instead of indignantly rejecting the ridiculous 'accusations' he made to you, you accepted them without giving any thought to what you were doing.»

Shule and Balluku opened their eyes in astonishment at what they were hearing, but when they saw the indignation and determination with which I was speaking they hung their heads and shrugged their shoulders as if to say, «Even in these situations only oppose the thunderbolts of the friends like this!»

Now it was not difficult to understand the meaning of

this new attack of the Yugoslavs! Indeed, rather than an attack this was a plan which came from Belgrade to feel our pulse. In Belgrade they had judged: «Let us strike a new blow at the Albanians and see how matters stand. If they reply angrily, then they have been informed by Stalin about what has been going on. If not, then, in the context of new accusations, let us carry the 8th Plenum deeper so that they will be forced to jump quickly into our arms.» It was not for nothing that on this occasion they activated the General and not the diplomat Zlatić.

I carefully weighed up the dirty provocation which they had made against us and thought that Tito should immediately receive the reply he deserved.

I demanded an urgent meeting of the Political Bureau (meanwhile Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo had returned from their «missions») and we began.

«I sought this special meeting of the Bureau,» I told the comrades, «to inform you of two important problems of the past four or five days.

«The first and most important problem has to do with a letter of the CC of the CPSU sent to the Yugoslav leadership at the end of March. I shall say nothing about the exceptional importance and value of this letter because you will understand this yourselves as soon as you hear it.»

For the first time after so many years of quarrels, debates and, frequently, meaningless rows, a complete, deep silence fell in our Political Bureau. While I was reading I could hear the breathing of the comrades. I knew the impressions and reactions which each paragraph and phrase of the letter aroused were different in the different comrades. Hysni and Gogo listened all serious attention, but I noticed that their faces and eyes were smiling; Bedri and Tuk sat in wide-eyed amazement at what they were hearing. As for Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo, Kristo Themelko, Nesti Kerenxhi and Xhoxhi Blushi, their heads were hanging and they were gasping for breath as if they were being hit in the ribs.

«That is the content of the letter,» I said to the comrades

when I had finished. «Now the next question is: How are we going to act after this? I think it is still too soon to discuss it. Each of us must sit down and study the letter, taking notes, so that we thoroughly understand its essence, and when we meet, each of us should speak freely, as his conviction and conscience tells him. In the analyses which we have made we have often suffered from a great evil: the tendency has existed for one comrade or the other to impose on others views and stands with which they are not in agreement. We must put an end to this tendency and I think we should set the example when we analyse this letter. Second, I think we should analyse the letter of the Soviet leadership on a broader plane. It seems to me that we know the leaders of the CPY, their line and stands better than the other communist parties, because we have had contacts, agreements and disagreements with them for years. Therefore, what we say in reply to the letter of the Bolshevik Party we must link with our own experience, with our relations with the Yugoslav leadership. Third,» I told the comrades, «I instruct that we must be extremely careful, vigilant and prudent, especially at these moments. We should bear well in mind the fact that the problems which have arisen between the Soviet leadership and the Yugoslav leadership are strictly internal matters, still under discussion between them. It would be an unpardonable sin if anyone of us, on account of the special relations which have been created with the Yugoslav leadership, were to hasten and bring to light outside our Bureau the problems which are raised in this letter. Such an action would bring great harm to us and would also further aggravate and complicate the relations created between the Soviet and the Yugoslav comrades. Applying the norms of relations between sister parties, Stalin sent us this letter for our information, and that is all. Whether or not we express solidarity with this letter, this Stalin does not demand of us, but neither does he deny our right to do so. This will depend on us. But, as I said, we must not pronounce ourselves on this today in a hasty manner. When we are ready, we shall meet.

«That was the first problem. From this moment, the letter of the Soviet leadership is at the disposal of each comrade of the Bureau and you may come and read it whenever you like and as frequently as you consider reasonable.

«The second problem,» I continued, «has to do with a grave incident which General Kuprešanin provoked two days ago.»

I mentioned in detail all the General's «accusations» and pointed out:

«Anyone can see that the things Kuprešanin raised are ridiculous, without any foundation and completely unjust. As to why the General took this step, this is another problem. To my mind, this was a provocation.»

«In what sense?» Koçi Xoxe hastened to ask.

«Mainly in two senses!» I replied there and then. «First, perhaps the General made these 'accusations', which I don't believe he himself can consider serious, with the aim of feeling our pulse, to see whether or not we have been informed about the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict. They will measure this from our stand towards the most recent accusations. Second, perhaps they made the 'accusations' with the aim that we should act as we acted with the 'accusations' of Zlatić in November, that is, organize another 8th Plenum and be compelled to accept all those 'proposals' which they have made to us recently. I see no other possibility, and precisely on this account I suspect that the stand of the Yugoslav General is a provocation. If you, Comrade Koçi, see some other motive, tell us so that we make no mistake...»

Koçi Xoxe said nothing more and after waiting a few seconds, I continued:

«Regardless of this, it is impermissible for us to fall prey to the provocation, but neither will we be hasty and bring out things which are extremely secret and still under discussion. For this reason I think we should immediately send Comrade Tito a letter in which we explain what Kuprešanin said, prove why his 'accusations' are baseless and ask him to explain what impelled the General to take this step.»

«Would it not be better to clear the matter up ourselves with Kuprešanin?» asked Nesti Kerenxhi, Koçi's deputy in the Ministry of the Interior, this time.

«By no means!» I replied. «He is simply a military man and there is no reason why we should discuss such problems with him. Indeed, I think we should stress this strongly to Tito in the letter.

«We should write that it does not seem to us correct that a general should come and raise these problems with us, even if they were well-based. We should say to Tito: If your comrades considered these matters important, then your ambassador Josip Djerdja or your 'delegate' Zlatić could come and point them out to us, but never the General.

«Likewise, we should write to Tito that it seems to us astonishing that the General threatens us with breaking off collaboration in the military field, simply because good seats were not reserved in the stadium for some Yugoslav officers! We should say, also, that we do not understand why such actions are being taken and, in the end, should repeat that we are for friendly relations in the spirit of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. We should stress this, comrades, because for some time a slogan impermissible for us has been introduced. Instead of the spirit of Marxism, some mention 'the spirit of the Economic Convention'. Such a thing is absurd. This is my opinion. Let us discuss it and reach a decision.»

«I am afraid of one thing!» Koçi Xoxe threw the stone, although with a weak and trembling voice. «Comrade Tito might link our reply with Stalin's letter and suspect that we have been informed about it.»

«What if he does!» said Hysni. «Let him suspect! He has no reason to take offence at it. On the contrary, let this impel him to inform us about the Yugoslav views, as Comrade Stalin quite rightly did about the Soviet views. Since he calls us a sister party, indeed the closest one, why should he keep these things hidden from us?!»

«But Tito might think that we opposed Kuprešanin be-

cause Stalin's letter influenced us!» Koçi Xoxe dared to add.

«You have no reason to think so badly of Comrade Tito!» I replied to Xoxe, goading him in «his own terrain». «Tito might have many faults and in my opinion he has plenty of them, but you have no reason to accuse him of a weak memory. This is not the first time we have opposed him. Without going back into past years, just during the past three or four months we have opposed him several times. We refused his demand about the division, refused the proposal about the unified command, refused the demand for the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia, now you have regrets because we are not accepting the stupidities of General Ku-prešanin! Do you think that we ought to hold another 8th Plenum on the basis of them?»

«No, you misunderstood me,» said Koçi Xoxe submissively. «I don't mind our writing the letter, but it seemed to me they might suspect we have been influenced by the Soviets. However, now I am convinced, I agree we should send the letter.»

The savage Koçi was no longer brandishing the «sword» which the 8th Plenum gave him, nor even raising his feathers. To say that he was frightened is putting it mildly. He was experiencing the first agony of the evil deed to which he had committed himself under the pressure and manoeuvres of Belgrade, but also on account of his own unhealthy ambitions and conscience.

This occurred on April 17, 1948, as I remember very well. I remember this date, because only one day later, April 18, 1948, it became quite clear that the cause of the Yugoslavs, at least in connection with our Party and country, had come to an end. It was more than clear to me that this end would come one day, but that it would come so quickly and in such unexpected, even ludicrous, circumstances, had never crossed my mind. This is what happened:

At that period, two or three Soviet film-makers had come to our country to make a documentary film about Albania. They had finished their work and before they left

for Moscow they informed me through the Soviet ambassador that they would be very happy if I would find the time to see the film they had made. I was very pleased to accept. On the evening of April 18, I invited the film-makers to the Palace of Brigades and together with them invited ambassador Chuvakin and the main functionaries of the Soviet embassy as our guests. I also sent an informal invitation to the Yugoslav ambassador and Savo Zlatić, the Bulgarian ambassador and some others that I don't remember. From our comrades, Hysni Kapo, Koçi Xoxe, Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova were present.

That was simply a social evening quite without protocol. Understandably, we gave the greatest honour to those who provided the occasion for us to get together — our film-maker guests. Very happy that we were meeting, after we had clinked glasses they got up to prepare the projector to show us the film. Everything was going very well up to this point, we were talking and cracking jokes.

Meanwhile, I saw Savo Zlatić stand up scowling, as if the dog had stolen his dinner. He went around the table where Koçi Xoxe was sitting, approached Hysni and seemed about to say something to him, but apparently changed his mind, made a sign to Djerdja and the two came towards me.

«Do you want to sit here?» I said to them cheerfully, and made room for them. «Sit down!»

«No, we are leaving!» said Savo Zlatić. I saw with astonishment that his face and neck were flushed red and he was clenching his jaws,

«Why?» I asked him. «Is something wrong?! Are you not feeling well?»

«Tomorrow afternoon or the day after tomorrow at the most, I am leaving for Belgrade,» said Zlatić brusquely. «But before I leave you must arrange for me a meeting with two comrades of your Central Committee to transmit our complaints.»

He was speaking with such tension and anger that it was useless to ask him to explain what was the cause of this sudden outburst.

«With whom do you wish to meet?» I asked.

«There is no further room for any preference!» he replied savagely and with cynicism. «With whoever is there.»

«Then, we shall appoint Comrade Xoxe,» I told him, making him snort a little, «and... Comrade Hysni Kapo!»

The Yugoslavs left. I was very surprised at what occurred but, nevertheless, I gave no sign of it. We had met for something else and I did not want to arouse any concern or suspicion in the guests. The only person who did not say a word or raise his head after this was Koçi Xoxe. The gloom of his face was blacker than the darkness that fell when they started to show the film.

The following day Hysni and Koçi Xoxe met Zlatić and what they transmitted to me was truly shameless.

According to Zlatić and Djerdja, the social evening which I described above was not a social evening but an «anti-Yugoslav demonstration» (?!), an «insult» which I had allegedly made to Zlatić, the Yugoslav army and all Yugoslavia!

«Why?» Hysni had asked him in surprise.

«Because Enver Hoxha had invited more Soviets than Yugoslavs, at a time when there are more Yugoslavs than Soviets in Albania! Because you had not invited General Kuprešanin, had not invited Yugoslav specialists...»

He had blurted out some other tales which are not worthy of mention and had concluded:

«There can be no further collaboration with you. After this insult General Kuprešanin and all the Yugoslav military men no longer have any place in Albania; we shall re-examine the economic agreements, we shall re-examine everything. We are leaving because your friendship with Yugoslavia has no foundation, our relations are worse than in June 1947 (when they made their first accusation), indeed, worse than in November (when they made their second accusation); because Enver Hoxha has always behaved with us in this way and...»

Events automatically turned in a new direction, or more precisely, precipitated at new, more rapid rates.

With the departure of the Yugoslav «envoys» and their

suite of advisers and specialists so suddenly and for so utterly ridiculous reasons, the Yugoslav leadership finally put the seal on an indisputable truth: their hostile and conspiratorial aims and ambitions towards Albania. There is no other way to explain this sudden and ignominious departure. In all that period, we had not given any occasion for any incident or misunderstanding in our relations with them. We had been extremely correct, indeed, we had tolerated and permitted stands and actions which in other situations we would have dismissed with indignation and scorn. At the same time, they had not heard a single word about how we were going to react to the letter of the Bolshevik Party and to the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict as a whole. It was not for nothing that in the meeting of the Political Bureau one day earlier, I did not express my opinion about Stalin's letter and it was not fortuitous that I demanded that the comrades should not pronounce themselves about it there and then. I did this so that the comrades could prepare themselves quietly and freely, but also in the belief that Xoxe and his clan would immediately pass our opinions on to their masters. Thus, we did not give them this weapon. Then, why did they clear out? No doubt because they were informed by Xoxe of just one fact: Stalin's letter had come into our hands. For the Yugoslavs this meant that their plot for the gobbling up of Albania had failed. They had been unable to make us yield when we knew nothing about the conflict which they had with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, let alone now when we saw that we were not alone in our efforts. Hence, convinced that they could gain nothing, they found the excuse and cleared out. In their fury and despair that they were unable to achieve their Yugoslavia of 7 republics, they no longer worried their heads about their agents. As Zlatić told me at the last moment, now they no longer had «preferences». For the plotters of Belgrade, as for the plotters of all times and countries, this was more than normal. They had never liked Koçi Xoxe and the others for the colour of their eyes. They wanted them to serve as their «internal»

support for the carrying out of the plot. Since they failed in their purpose, to the devil with the tools! Let them do what they pleased, or what they could! If through trickery they managed to escape our justice, then in suitable situations their patrons would launch them into activity again. If they did not escape, then the Serbian church would light a candle for them, while now that the plot had failed, a heavy sentence on the agents would be convenient to the Titoite propaganda. They would accuse us of «violations of democracy», etc., etc.

In order to be just and correct to the end, immediately after the crazy act which Kuprešanin and Zlatić committed, we sent Tito another letter in which we expressed our astonishment and indignation about their departure without any cause from our side. Tito replied within two days, naturally, defending the action of his delegates in a few general words, and at the same time, accusing us of causing the tension in relations. And why? Tito listed three causes:

First, «you [the Albanians] are lacking in the necessary faith in our opinions about Albania.»¹

Second, «we [the Yugoslavs] cannot agree to make material sacrifices, which are not small, in favour of Albania and to the detriment of our people, and despite this not see the improvement of our relations.»

What Tito understood with this «improvement of relations» he expressed openly in the third «cause»:

«If we truly desire a rapprochement,» concluded the Marshal, «then let us re-examine our collaboration... and increase it on a basis which responds to the given stage and the international circumstances.»

As to what this «given stage» and these «international circumstances» which Tito mentioned in an undertone were, this his delegates had told us unequivocally earlier: «the stage of federal union» to emerge in «the tense international circumstances» as a «minor power». After this he did

1 The words in quotation marks have been taken from the letter of J. B. Tito to the CC of the CPA of April 22, 1948, CAP.

not fail to repeat the threat that they would cut off aid, re-examine all their relations with us, and he «advised» us to seek the culprits in «a part of your leadership» which had not agreed with the dictates of the Yugoslavs!

These orders and «advice» of the Marshal were extremely threadbare! We had long been acquainted with them, had suffered damage from them, but now they had no effect. We analysed his letter and sent him the reply he deserved. From the outset we told him openly that the leadership of the CPY should seek and find the cause, first of all, in itself, in its impermissible mistakes and stands towards us for years on end. We also pointed out in the letter that the time had come for our Party to look into the matter deeply, with criticism and self-criticism, to find the true causes of the deterioration of relations.

After pointing out that we had worked sincerely since the years of the war and after it to strengthen our friendship, we stressed that our principal mistake was that «Our Party and its Central Committee, with great belief and trust in the CPY, have more than once accepted harsh criticisms made verbally by the CC of the CPY against our Party, against its leadership and members of our Party. These things,» we wrote, «we frequently accepted as indisputable, a thing which is not objective, but on the contrary, is outside the Marxist-Leninist principles and Marxism-Leninism. We admit that we have not acted correctly in this direction...»¹

We went on to refute with arguments all the accusations which Tito made against us, one by one, explained why we considered their stands unfair and sinister and... we left the ball in their court to manoeuvre as seemed best to them.

The reply came very quickly, except that this time, since Tito «was not» in Belgrade, Djilas signed it.

In three lines he told us that our letter did not constitute any basis for discussion and waved a threatening index finger at us:

1 From the letter of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPA to J. B. Tito, May 23, 1948 CAP.

«Meanwhile,» he wrote, «in order to put our relations in order as quickly as possible, we propose that you should send a delegation which, together with us, will examine all the questions and conclude protocols about our economic relations on the basis of our former proposals»!¹

O tempora, o mores!

What is the explanation for this custom of revisionists?! Do they all copy one another, or does their disease drive them to find the same course? Who can forget the year 1960 and the beginning of 1961 in our battles with Khrushchev and company? Who can forget their insistent demands, after the great breach of November 1960, that we send a delegation² to Moscow on any condition, in order to «sign the agreements»?!

The same thing with the Yugoslavs! Except not in 1960 but in 1948. On both occasions the aim of the revisionists was the same: an urgent summons to «Canossa» to subjugate us! But on both occasions our stand was the same. We told them where they got off.

But we are talking about our battles with the first current of modern revisionism in power, the Yugoslav current. That is how everything came to an end in the spring of 1948.

1 From the letter of the CC of the CPY to the CC of the CPA, May 27, 1948. CAP.

2 See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, pp. 469-470, Eng. ed.

IX

OUR FINAL BREACH WITH TITO AND THE TITOITES

The public denunciation of Titoism ■ On the relations of the CPA with the CPSU and the parties of the other countries until 1948 ■ An incognito journey to Rumania in connection with Tito's betrayal. A meeting with Andrey Vyshinsky. The meeting with Vyshinsky and Dej. Irrefutable arguments of the CPA on Tito's traitorous activity. Vyshinsky: «The Bolshevik Party approves the correct activity and struggle of the CPA in defence of Marxism-Leninism.» A visit to Bucharest. Back home ■ Desperate manoeuvres of Koçi Xoxe and company to escape exposure and rendering account ■ Profound analyses in our Political Bureau. Kristo Themelko and Pandi Kristo testify ■ The 10th and 11th Plenums of the CC of the CPA. «The line of the CPA has been correct. It has been attacked but has not wavered, has been threatened but has not been damaged» ■ The historic 1st Congress of the CPA. Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo in the dock ■ The end of our relations with Tito and the Titoites.

The sudden and ignominious departure from Albania of Tito's envoys and their suite in the spring of 1948 brought about a rapid improvement in our affairs. This was reflected both in the subsequent development of relations between our Party and the Yugoslav Party and in the relations within the

leadership and the whole of our Party. The defeat of the plotters of Belgrade was at the same time a total defeat for their agents who had operated for years, sometimes openly, sometimes in secrecy, within our Party. The time had come for a final settling of accounts with both groups.

The public denunciation of Titoism

The pressure which Tito and company exerted in April and May 1948 about «re-examining our position», the demand that we send a top-level delegation to Belgrade to «iron out the disagreements», etc. were like the final desperate writhings of drowning men of all times. The Titoite leaders were now more than convinced that the game was up for them in Albania.

It is interesting to observe a permanent characteristic of Titoites: while in «normal», «quiet» periods they are wily, past masters of manoeuvres with a thousand and one disguises, tricks and plots, completely the opposite occurs when their trickery is revealed. They completely lose their heads. On such occasions they are seized by utter confusion and loss of reason, their chauvinist fury and megalomania make them lose all sense, they become utterly brutal and allow themselves actions and stands which simply discredit them and expose them even more thoroughly. This is what occurred with them in 1948, and again in 1981 and in 1982.

When they saw that they had «lost» Albania, quite without cause or reason, they recalled their ambassador, the Albanian-speaking Titoite Josip Djerdja, to Belgrade at the beginning of June.

Meanwhile, they sent us an official invitation to the 5th Congress of their party, although, before they sent us the invitation, they were quite clear that our reply would be a curt «No».

Apparently, Tito wanted us to hear with our own ears directly from him, Tempo and others the base accusations and insinuations which they were to make publicly in Belgrade against our Party. But the stench of their slanders reached us. At the congress Tito presented the absurd claim «about the role of Miladin Popović and Dušan Mugoša in the formation of the CPA», while Tempo, to win promotion and satisfaction in public, vested himself with the merits of the «critical» and «guide» of our Party and our war in the years 1943-1944!

It was clear to us why this was done.

Tito was making another attempt to «forestall the evil». He knew that sooner or later we would raise our voice and publicly bring out all the evils which he had tried to inflict (and did inflict) on our Party and country. Our facts and arguments would tear him to shreds. This being the case, he threw the first stone to find an excuse and to «defend» himself on the grounds that «the Albanians attack us because we said something about them at the congress»!

However, these «new» manoeuvres would neither nonplus us nor make us hang our heads. On the contrary, we were to raise our voice even more sternly and with greater adherence to principle against his filthy allegations. It was our turn to have our say. The time had come for the public denunciation of Tito and Titoism.

Meanwhile, we had received the second and third letters of the CC of the CPSU to the Yugoslav leadership (one dated May 4, the other dated May 28) and the Resolution of the Information Bureau of June 1948, in which, after correct Marxist-Leninist analyses, the anti-Marxist deviation of the revisionist leadership in Belgrade was publicly denounced. The leadership and our whole Party, like the entire Albanian people, expressed immediate and unanimous solidarity with these important documents and at the proper moment we openly and publicly expressed our stands and decisions in regard to the Belgrade traitors. In particular, the 9th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, which met from June 27-30, 1948, dwelt on the analyses of the letters of the Bolshevik Party and the

Resolution of the Information Bureau, and all the comrades, in complete unanimity, expressed their solidarity with the denunciation and exposure which was being made of the CC of the CPY for its distortion of Marxism-Leninism, for its slipping into Trotskyism, national chauvinism, etc. During the same days we decided to denounce and reject all the enslaving treaties which had been signed with Yugoslavia, and in particular, all the accords that had to do with the notorious Economic Convention. Our People's Assembly, which took these decisions, left in force only the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid signed in July 1946. Our public announcement about these important decisions was received with joy and enthusiasm by the whole people. In particular, the communiqué of the CC of the CPA about our unanimous solidarity with the letters of the Bolshevik Party and the Resolution of the Information Bureau, which was published on July 1, 1948, aroused great enthusiasm and made a profound impression inside and outside of Albania.

I shall say something more, later, about how these documents were received and analysed in our Party, but here I want to point out something else.

On account of our immediate expression of solidarity with the letters of the Bolshevik Party and the Resolution of the Information Bureau, Tito and company made the accusation that we «had fallen under the influence of the Soviets», while others, including some comrades of the communist parties of that time, together with their great joy, also expressed... their great surprise! We could not agree with either of these two kinds of reactions towards our lawful and natural stand, because neither of them expressed the truth. On the contrary, they were insulting and disparaging estimations of our Party. Why?

In regard to Tito's accusation about our «falling under the influence of the Soviets», for us Albanian communists this was quite absurd and ridiculous. Indeed, in our case there could be no talk of any sort of interference by the CPSU, but rather the opposite.

The stand of the CPSU towards our Party in those years had been correct, reasonable, extremely cautious, indeed cautious to the point of a certain «neglect». With the exception of the unforgettable days when we went to Moscow in the summer of 1947 and met the great Stalin, with the exception of the warm, fraternal and internationalist welcome which he accorded us, the wise words and advice he gave us, it must be admitted that on other occasions, up until the spring of 1948, we did not feel the word and the hand of the CPSU towards our Party and our problems to the due extent, or as we expected. Here I am referring to direct aid on cardinal questions of the life and the central line of the Party, and especially in regard to our relations with the CP of Yugoslavia.

Making a detailed analysis in the light of all the important events that occurred during these decades, we can say that from the end of the Second World War the Soviets did not display any interest in Albania, did not know many things, either about the history of our people through the centuries or about our National Liberation War. Even though about the end of our people's National Liberation War a Soviet military mission headed by Major Ivanov came to our country, as I said earlier, Ivanov was not able to see and understand the majesty and depth of the war of our people and our Party. He did nothing but transmit gossip gathered here and there and eventually, at the time of the backstage plot of Berat, he became a good ally and collaborator of Velimir Stojnić.

Such a fact does not indicate simply the lack of capacity of this Soviet Major, who had come from Greece with one companion, with a radio on his back, to make contact with the Albanian partisans, but, in the first place, it implies a lack of proper interest in our war on the part of the Soviet leadership. As can be judged, it was interested in and very well informed about the Yugoslav National Liberation War, and must have had more faith in this at a time when it had no confidence in the Greek National Liberation War,

while we never came within its reckoning at all. It did not know us in the least and defended us only because it had to adhere to principles! Apparently, the Titoites gave them very little information about us and in the way it pleased them, and the Soviet leadership must have arrived at the practical conclusion: «Let the Yugoslavs deal with the Albanian partisans.» This idea prevailed even after Liberation, to the extent that Molotov personally said, «We give Albania economic aid through Yugoslavia.» And since the «Yugoslav aid» was nothing at all, we can conclude that the Soviet aid did not exist up until the moment when our relations with Titoite Yugoslavia were broken off. Until then the Soviets had ignored Tito's undermining work against our country and Party and done nothing to restrain the Yugoslavs who were operating against us, apart from the direct intervention of Stalin when I sought his opinion to repulse the dispatch of the Yugoslav division to Albania.

Up until this time, our relations with the Soviet Union and the CPSU were realized mainly through the Soviet embassy. From our point of view, the employees of this embassy were good people, but they, for their part, were only «employees» who never said a word, let alone act without permission from Moscow. They themselves had no initiative and we could hold no serious discussion with them. When I say serious, I am referring to important questions of principle, as for example, many unjust stands which we saw on the part of the Yugoslavs. They shied away from these conversations as the wolf shies away from the fire. Why? They had to receive orders from Moscow! They could not take any step without orders from Moscow, like the real *chinovniki** they were. They were ready to listen to us when we told them anything and to transmit to us the answer we sought. In general, this is how ideological and political questions were dealt with between us and the people of the Soviet embassy. However, as much as they did, we, for our

* Bureaucratic state functionaries of czarist Russia.

part considered it great assistance and everything they told us we considered as coming from Moscow, from the Soviet leadership, from Stalin! It was a different matter with the Soviet advisers who helped us in the sectors of the economy and culture. They helped us greatly, gave us advice and concrete aid, discussed problems with us and our specialists, because they knew they were helping a socialist country, a party and a people that loved them. They did not have the complexes of diplomats, or the fear about their «careers» or the spirit of bureaucrats and *chinovniki*.

Of course, this made an impression on us, and we mulled it over in our minds, but proceeding from the highest and indisputable regard in which we held the glorious Party of Lenin and Stalin, we never formed reservations or the slightest shred of discontent towards it. On the contrary, we justified this stand of the CPSU with a series of arguments and reasons which were not wrong in principle, either then or now.

During those years, our relations with the other sister parties of the countries of people's democracy were even weaker, if not totally non-existent. We never considered this situation correct or acceptable, although we were convinced that this would not go on for long and we worked to create direct links with the other sister parties, in the first place, with the CPSU. Our persistence about sending a top-level delegation to Moscow (which was realized in July 1947), to Bulgaria (in December 1947), etc. was precisely a well-considered and weighed-up step on our part, which speaks about our concern to create the most extensive bilateral and multi-lateral links with the sister communist and workers' parties and the fraternal countries of people's democracy. If, however, up till the spring of 1947 we had not been able to achieve anything more, the fault for this was by no means ours. The main and deliberate culprit for this was the leadership of Belgrade, headed by Tito. As has been fully proved, they tried to keep us under their wing, isolated from the sister communist parties, from the Soviet Union and the

other socialist countries, with the idea that we were only «an appendage of the CPY», at the most, a part of what they subsequently called «the League of Communists of Yugoslavia». Taking advantage of the slight experience of the CPA in its relations with the sister parties, and exploiting the request we made in 1942 that they intervene on our behalf with the Comintern, Tito and company turned our request into a kind of «mandate» which they used for years on end in the most villainous and anti-Marxist way.

We do not have detailed documents about how Tito and company dealt with the problem of our Party with the sister parties in the years 1944-1947, but about one thing we are convinced: the Belgrade leaders with cunning and evil intent had cast a shadow of doubt, to a greater or lesser extent, over the ability of the CPA to be a separate independent party capable of determining its own line, of applying this line and leading the Albanian people with mastery and adherence to principle on the road of socialism. That is, the Yugoslavs had created the absurd and alien idea that it was they that kept us going, and fed us, that the existence or non-existence of the Communist Party of Albania depended on them! To what extent this dirty, false propaganda had become implanted in the other parties is another matter, but the fact is that Tito and his emissaries had developed this propaganda to a system. There is no need, nor is this the place to go into detailed arguments, but I shall mention only two or three instances. In 1946 the Information Bureau of the communist parties of Europe was created with the participation of 9 parties, including all the parties of the then socialist countries, as well as the CP of France and that of Italy. Only one party of a socialist country of Europe was left out: the Communist Party of Albania! I do not wish to express any sort of dissatisfaction over why our Party was not included in this important forum, but the fact that only one communist party of a socialist country was left out made one suspect that there was something wrong about this. Whether this came about from the lack of knowledge

or misinformation from others — this problem will be explained with the passage of time. Our conviction is that the black hand of the Titoite agency was hidden in this. They did not want the CPA to be acknowledged in the international communist movement as a separate party, as the party of a sovereign country, of a valiant and unyielding people, because otherwise, their plans and the underhand work they were doing for the annexation of Albania as the 7th Republic of the Yugoslav state would have come to nothing!

The very fact that in this whole period from 1945 to the spring of 1947 we were not aware of any initiative, let alone visible efforts, on the part of the sister parties to establish sound permanent links with our Party, for consultations, exchanges of opinions and experience, is another argument which speaks about the shadow which the Yugoslav Trotskyites had cast over the prestige of our Party as a whole. Likewise, it is a fact that among a number of leaders of several sister parties, Tito and company had created, if not the opinion, at least the suspicion that the CPA was a creation subject to the line of the CPY! This was a very unpleasant observation for us. I well remember when one of our comrades, who had just returned from a festival (organized in Czechoslovakia, if I am not mistaken), came to me with tears in his eyes and told me:

«Our national flag was the only one missing from among those of the participating countries!»

«And what did you do about it?» I asked him. «Did you ask your hosts why?»

«Yes!» the comrade told me. «We told them about it and they were nonplussed and embarrassed and, while begging our pardon, replied: 'We thought that the flag of Yugoslavia represented Albania too.'»!

I cannot forget, also, the letters of many of our students and specialists who were being trained in the former people's democracies, letters in which they spoke with indignation about occasions when the ministers or the authorities of one or the other country, before their eyes, «sought the permis-

sion» of the Yugoslav ambassador to establish trade relations... directly with Albania!

We never bore grudges against our friends over this, nevertheless, the truth remains the truth, whether bitter or sweet! Precisely in the fact that Tito's anti-Albanian plot had not failed to have an effect, to a greater or lesser extent, lies the explanation also for the «surprise» and «joy» of a number of leaders of the sister parties at that time when... unexpectedly (!) they learned of the sound, valiant and courageous Marxist-Leninist stand of the CPA against the Yugoslav revisionists! Quite openly, without any embarrassment they asked themselves, one another and even us:

«How is it possible that the CPA takes such a resolute and principled stand?! How is it possible that you denounce and expose the leadership of the CPY?!»

In this case, however, not they, but we had the justified right to be astonished at their «astonishment». Not they, but we had the justified right to ask them:

«Why this astonishment on your part, comrades?! Why these opinions about a communist party?!»

We had the right to ask them these questions because, as is known, genuine Marxist-Leninists never evaluate and must not evaluate sister parties on the basis of what «others», «third parties», «intermediaries», say about them. Even less should this occur when nobody had authorized or charged such «intermediaries» to play this role or, even worse, when this role was placed in error upon such evil intermediaries as the Titoite leaders were.

Nevertheless, now that matter had turned out well, we had the legitimate right to be proud, because even in such difficult and complex conditions, not only internally, but also externally, we were able to emerge successful, even alone were able to get over the difficult paths, traps and plots wisely, through adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles.

Hence, while doing battle alone with the revisionist leadership of the CPY, we arrived at the same opinions and conclusions as the sister parties, without any knowledge that

others, in the first place, the Bolshevik Party, headed by the great Stalin, were engaged in the same struggle.

This was and remains a great and incontestable merit of our Party, a source of honour and pride for us!

After these moments, the hand of the sister parties was quickly extended to us and we seized their hand in friendship, because we had been waiting for and expecting this for years. We considered this not only a duty, but also a legitimate right.

Now, shoulder to shoulder with the sister parties and, first of all, with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, we would work and fight better for the progress of socialism in our country, for the further strengthening of the prestige and authority of our Party and our country in the international arena.

Now, shoulder to shoulder with the sister parties we would make our contribution more vigorously to a more profound knowledge, to the exposure and condemnation of Titoite revisionism to its very roots. Because of the special conditions of our relations with the Titoite leadership over those 6-7 years, this was a field in which we felt we had much to tell them and to prove.

An incognito journey to Rumania in connection with Tito's betrayal

A meeting with Vyshinsky and Dej

Throughout the whole communist and workers' movement and public opinion world-wide, in the summer of 1948 it became known that Tito and his associates had betrayed Marxism-Leninism and the socialist camp. The contradictions between us and the Yugoslav Titoites in this period were so great that they could easily develop into dangerous conflicts. The Soviets, being well-acquainted with Tito over a

whole period, and thinking that we were geographically isolated from them and surrounded by enemy states, wanted to discuss as intimately and directly as possible with us about the measures which we should take in this situation. Likewise, they felt it necessary to hear what we had to say and our opinions directly and in detail about the long conflict we had had with the Yugoslav leadership. This would assist the further analysis which the Information Bureau was to make of the anti-Marxist stands and line of the chiefs of Belgrade.

Precisely for these reasons, in the summer of 1948 a meeting was organized in Bucharest in which Vyshinsky, Gheorghiu-Dej and I took part.

With the greatest pleasure I accepted the invitation to go to Bucharest which the Soviet ambassador Chuvakin brought me. Dimitri Stepanovich Chuvakin, the first ambassador of the USSR to Albania, was a straight-forward man with whom we had generally got along well, although, as I said above, the range of problems which we discussed left something to be desired. I spoke to Chuvakin in French, a language which he, too, understood and spoke. I have very rarely met Soviet leaders who spoke French, as those who knew the language did not speak it because they did not want to speak it. Why? They reserved the right to listen when one spoke and gain time to think about their reply while the interpreter was completing the translation in Russian. Or perhaps for precise diplomatic behaviour. But even if the latter were the reason, it seems to me that such a thing should not have existed amongst us. Many times I have met Molotov and Gromyko and talked with them, I in French, whereas they, always, in Russian and never in French. They knew French, but certainly for the reasons I mentioned, they did not speak it.

One morning we set out for Bucharest by Soviet aircraft. We were to travel through Yugoslav airspace, although we had become enemies with them. A hero of the Soviet Union flew the aircraft. The Soviets had sent this pilot to get me, because he knew the route over which the

aircraft was to pass and there was greater security for me, if the Yugoslav secret service were to learn of my journey. Only Chuvakin and I were on board the aircraft. We were not obliged to stop in Belgrade, indeed at that time the aircraft was not allowed to fly via Belgrade at all, but left it to the north. Not only this, but later, for a period of several years, when the relations between the Titoites and the Soviet Union and our socialist states were very tense (until Khrushchev came to power), the Yugoslavs did not allow the regular aircraft of the Soviet line to fly over their territory. Thus, to spend eight days travelling by Soviet cargo ships, which were not big and tossed one about a great deal, to Odessa and another two days from Odessa to Moscow by train, or more rarely by aircraft, was a minimum for us.

On this trip the weather was fine and sunny, with no clouds and from the aircraft we saw the land of Yugoslavia with the plains which were never to be collectivized, the land unsystemized, as ours was in the first years of Liberation, and as the land of Rumania over which we flew was.

At the airport of Bucharest we were met by Dej, Anna Pauker, the Soviet ambassador and some other comrades. As far as I remember, we still did not have an embassy in Bucharest, nor the Rumanians in Albania. The formalities had not been completed and the relations between our countries of people's democracy in the first period of Liberation were still not fully subject to diplomatic rules, but continued in an informal way. In our country everything was in order, the people's power had been established on sound constitutional foundations, while in Rumania no. It took Rumania some time to liquidate the monarchy and King Michael, the powerful capitalist relations which still existed, the remnants of Antonescu's fascist «Iron Guard», which were still active at the time of my stay at Bucharest, etc. The decisive factor in the liberation of Rumania and the liquidation of these dangerous remnants was the Soviet army. All the rest was just tales and boasting of Gheorghiu-Dej, as I shall relate

later in connection with the talks I had with him during my stay there.

We embraced with Dej, Anna Pauker and the other comrades. My first impression when I met Gheorghiu-Dej at the airport was good, not only because I had heard good things said about him by the Soviets, but also because he had a reputation as a veteran communist who had «suffered» in the dungeons of Doftana. Later we learned an incident from his life. During the time he was imprisoned in Doftana an earthquake struck Bucharest¹, and guards and prisoners, ordinary and political, ran away in fright. Only Gheorghiu-Dej did not budge from the prison and when the gendarmes returned and found him inside they asked him in astonishment: «You did not run away?» «No,» replied Dej, «I respect the law.»

Dej was a tall man, with black eyes, black brows and hair, well dressed and cheerful, who gave the impression of a *perifani* as we say in Gjirokastra about those people who are vigorous and energetic and speak with a sort of pride in themselves, self-satisfied with what they say and do. Anna Pauker was a woman of a quieter nature than Dej, although she seemed energetic, too. She was a big, heavy-featured woman who looked as if she had suffered more in prison than Dej, her hair was gray and cut short as they say *à la garçonne*.

I got into a big Soviet ZIS car together with Dej. The others got into cars, too. When I was to enter the car the driver opened the door for me and I did not notice that it was an armoured car. I saw this when I got out and opened the door from inside. Never before had I had the occasion to see such a thing, although I had read in newspapers and books that such cars were used by kings and dictators to protect themselves from attempts on their lives, and by gangsters to protect themselves from the attacks of the police. Once in the car, it seemed to me I was not in a car, but in

1 On November 10, 1940.

a real arsenal: both on my side and Dej's side we had a German twenty-round automatic pistol, each with two spare magazines, under our feet we each had another German twenty-round pistol with spare magazines and, of course, the guard and the driver had the same.

I said to Dej as a joke:

«We can fight for 20 days with these weapons, it seems as though we were in the house of Oso Kuka,»¹ and I quickly explained who Oso Kuka was. But to myself I said, «Whatever they say about Oso Kuka the fact is that he fought like a man and did not surrender.» My impression was not good, not because Dej had thought about taking measures for defence, but because those measures were excessive. They showed either that the Rumanian comrades were as frightened as rabbits, or that the situation in their country was by no means as calm as they tried to make out.

When I commented on the «arsenal» Dej replied:

«We must be vigilant!»

«Of course, we must be vigilant,» I said to myself, «but not let the enemy terrify us. We must terrify him and make him tremble.» As far as I could see the enemy in Rumania had not been dealt with firmly as in our country.

On the way from the airport to Bucharest, Dej said to me:

«We are not going into the city, but will turn off to a house on the plain outside Bucharest, where we have taken measures for you to stay since you are *incognito* and Vyshinsky has not yet arrived. We expect him tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, at the latest. There where we're going,» continued Dej, «is a very reliable family, an old base where I have stayed before Liberation. The son of the house is a communist and his mother is a very dear old lady who

¹ Commander of an Albanian volunteer unit in the 60's of the 19th century. Fighting for the defence of the Albanian territories, he was encircled by Montenegrin bands in a house near the Shkodra Lake and rather than fall in their hands, blew up the house with himself and his 23 men together with many of his Montenegrin enemies.

keeps her mouth shut. You will be very well looked after there.»

«It has not the slightest importance for me», I told him. «I shall be quite all right wherever you have decided I shall stay.»

Nevertheless, these things surprised me and I asked myself the question: «Is the situation so bad for them in the city that they cannot take me to some apartment there? Either they are so insecure that are unable to protect me, whom nobody knows, or is it that they want to keep the meeting strictly secret?» However, these latter ideas did not convince me.

We arrived at the house. It was a peasant home amid the fields, small but pleasant, both inside and out. It was surrounded with trees and flowers. At the door mother and son welcomed us. They were both very handsome, the mother above sixty years old and the son in his forties. We went inside where everything was clean, the walls painted white, a well-furnished house in Rumanian style. Dej told my hosts that I was a very close friend of his and would be their guest for a very short time, etc. They were happy and replied to Dej in their own language which I understood a little from its similarity to Italian and French. When Dej was about to leave, Chuvakin also asked me to excuse him, saying that he had to go to the Soviet embassy to discuss with the ambassador what had to be done and that he would come back to inform me.

Thus, I was left alone with my hosts and the French interpreter whom Dej left me.

After lunching together with our hosts I went to take a rest. Everything in this village home was clean, quiet and attractive. This helped me overcome my boredom from remaining alone and would allow me, in the quiet of the night, to classify the materials and opinions which I would present in the meeting with Vyshinsky and Dej. During lunch and in the afternoon, after my rest, I took the opportunity to talk with my hosts and to learn about the situation in the country

to the extent that they knew it and were able to answer my questions.

«The situation is not yet completely clear,» said the mother, «but we are masters of it. We drove out the king and liberated the country thanks to Stalin's Red Army. Another advantage from this was that the country was not burnt and devastated except for a few things; our industry is running. Our country is fertile, but from now on it will become more fertile and more prosperous. To tell you the truth,» continued the old lady, «the economy is still not in the hands of our state, the capitalists are still very much alive, the big and medium merchants have their property, exploit it freely and live well, even though our state levies taxes on them.

«When I have the opportunity to meet Dej,» continued the old lady, «I ask him, 'What are you doing? Are you still leaving these capitalists and the wealthy of the land who sucked our blood, who were supporters of the Germans and of Codreanu¹ and the *Conducator** (Antonescu)² who sent our boys to burn Russia and be killed there?'

'Be patient,' Dej replies, 'everything will come in its own time.'»

In this way I passed a part of the time until the evening of the following day when Dej came to take me to Bucharest. My hosts and I parted like good friends. The old lady kissed me, gave me a gift of a small wooden vase which she had made herself during the winter and said to me:

«Come back again, don't forget us!»

Even now, after so many years I have not forgotten these good simple people of the Rumanian countryside, whose names I do not know, because they did not tell me and I did not ask, since I observed the *incognito* «rules» which Dej had laid down.

In the car, Dej told me that Vyshinsky would come the

1 Codreanu Corneliu-Zelea — Rumanian fascist politician.

* Leader (Rum. in the original).

2 General, fascist dictator of Rumania (1940-1944).

following day and that Chuvakin and I were to stay in the former king's palace.

«This is like the characters from the Grimm brothers' fairy tales, going from the peasant's cottage to the king's palace!» I told Dej. «Please, don't take me there. I don't like such places. I prefer to stay in an apartment in the middle of the city, amongst the people, because no one knows me and there is no danger for me.»

«No,» said Dej. «You will stay there, because we were embarrassed yesterday, leaving you outside the city, and then that is where the meeting will be held. All the facilities are there.»

I repeated my protest and told him:

«For me it was a great honour to stay with that simple pleasant family and you have no reason to be embarrassed.»

However, I had to go, like it or not.

We arrived at one of the «famous» palaces of the Rumanian kings. This was not one of the major palaces. It was a building of considerable size with long colonnaded corridors. It was encircled with walls and had a number of small plots of grass, amongst which flowers appeared here and there, as though planted by some hand that knew nothing about this work. They took us to some bare rooms which could not be called either large or small; to reach the bathroom you had to go out through the corridor. Clearly, the palace was neglected, especially the upper rooms. Not only did the building get little sunshine, but it had no electric light or water. On the lower floor there were some rooms in rather better order, which had apparently been given more attention because Vyshinsky was to come there for the meeting.

During the day we had nothing to do. We asked Dej if we could go out and see Bucharest. He agreed and proposed that we made an excursion to the city and returned to the Central Committee.

«There,» said Dej, «you will meet a comrade of our

1 German linguists, collectors and editors of fairy tales' publications.

Political Bureau, one of our best comrades, Kishinevsky. Kishinevsky is a Soviet citizen from Bukovina. He fought in Rumania and helped us and after liberation I asked Stalin to allow Kishinevsky to give up his Soviet citizenship and take Rumanian citizenship and let us keep him in Rumania,» Dej told me. «Stalin agreed and that's what was done.»

Passing through the streets of Bucharest, from the speed of the car and from being obliged to listen to what Dej's interpreter said, of course, I was not able to see much, however, from what I saw, the streets seemed clean, with trees and gardens, with no apparent ruins or war damage; with many well-stocked shops, the windows full of goods. And as always occurred when I was far from the Homeland, here, too, my mind went to my own country which was burned and devastated by the war; when I saw the shops of Bucharest full of goods, I thought of the empty shops of our cities, but never fell into despair. «We shall have everything, too; we shall make them ourselves, new and beautiful. We are proud that we fought the enemies heroically and won our freedom by shedding blood and did not wait for anyone to give it to us.»

When we arrived at the premises of the Central Committee, Dej, without knocking, opened a door and led me into a room. Writing at a small table in one corner of the room was a person who stood up, came towards us, held out his hand and introduced himself. This was Kishinevsky. He was a small man with a thin face and body, and with dark glasses which, when he removed them, revealed two bright intelligent eyes. It was difficult for him to find space in the room to place some chairs for us, not because the room was small, but because it was filled with countless big packages, piled on the floor like the bricks which trucks unload in front of buildings under construction. The packages contained banknotes. I said to Dej with a laugh:

«I am continuing to experience the marvels of fairy tales. Now, I seem to be in Ali Baba's cave and not in the premises of the Central Committee.»

Dej explained that they had removed the notes from the bank because there they were not safe, might be stolen by the employees who, as he said, were the old ones and uncontrolled. Hence, despite their boasting, insecurity continued in this country, although Kishinevsky did not fail to tell us about the «heroism» of the Rumanian communists and the party which was «strong» and well organized. As for the «great heroism» of Dej, he would tell us about this himself in the evening after dinner.

After we had dinner with Dej in our new «residence», amongst other things he told us how they had forced King Michael to abdicate. I knew that this king was one of the worst and most bankrupt in Europe. He was the son of Carol II, who was nothing but a king of scandals, an oppressor of the people, pro-Italian and pro-German. There was nothing Rumanian about him, either by birth or in the uniform he wore. All he had was the support of the Rumanian fascists and big landowners and one of his main courtisans, Lupescu.

His son, Michael, was completely like his father and the people's expression «Like father, like son» fitted him to a T. However, this carnival king did what he did and received the highest Soviet wartime order, the Order of Victory, which, at that time, Eisenhower and Tito were the only other foreigners to hold. Tito, at least had fought at that time, and the Yugoslav partisans were outstanding in the fighting. But what did the Rumanians do? They put the Ukraine, Odessa and other Soviet cities to the torch, together with the Hitlerites. And what was Michael doing at this time? Amusing himself in his palaces.

This was impermissible opportunism on the part of the Soviets. It should never have crossed their mind to award this worthless creature even the smallest medal, let alone the Order of Victory. Was he given the order because he did not resist the attack of the Red Army? What could the scum do? Raise his hands in surrender, just as he did. Is that why he was awarded the Order of Victory, because he raised his hands? This was too much to swallow.

I mentioned these thoughts, which were hammering away in my head, to Vyshinsky while conversing with him after the meeting, when he told us how Michael had received him in audience, how Vyshinsky had gone dressed in a «tail coat», how the king had decorated him and Vyshinsky, in front of the king, had taken the medal and stuck it, on the... tail of his coat.

After lunch, in the small garden of ex-King Michael's palace, while talking about his «struggle» against this king, Dej related to us the history of how he and Petru Groza, at that time prime minister, prepared his abdication and the overthrow of the Rumanian monarchy.

He told us that the king still had a part of the army, commanded by generals loyal to him. He resided in his royal palace in Bucharest together with the queen mother, and a string of courtesans. The palace was guarded by soldiers and senior officers loyal to him.

«Although he had no power in his hands,» said Dej, «still he was a major obstacle for us, because we had to adhere to the rules of the Constitution in connection with him, as well as to the provisions of the agreement which had been signed with the Soviets. However, in the end we took everything into account and decided to impose abdication on him. First, I discussed the matter with Groza who agreed, except that he was in favour of avoiding any aggravation of the situation, wanting to do the thing 'gently'. I drafted the text of his abdication,» Dej told us, «Groza made some formal alterations and he as prime minister and I as secretary of the Rumanian Communist Party sought an audience with the king, who granted it.

«Groza and I went by car to the palace. It was surrounded by officers in brilliant uniforms. We went inside and climbed the stairs which were lined with senior officers, their leather belts pulled tight, emblazoned with epaulets and decorations and the brilliantine on their hair gleaming in the light of the chandeliers of the palace. They were haughty and looked at us with glowering faces, but were obliged to

respect us because they knew that we held power. We climbed the stairs with solemn mien and Groza carried the briefcase containing the document.

«A general, the king's adjutant,» continued Dej, «ushered us into a waiting-room, asked us to wait, then, after a short time, took us into the throne-room, as they called it. The king was not there, but the queen mother rose to her feet and welcomed us. Groza kissed her hand, but not I,» said Dej. «We began to converse about the rain and the sunshine until the king, whose chair was placed higher than his mother's and, of course, higher than ours, deigned to come. The king's mother was an old whore,» said Dej, «but she was cunning, she knew how to manoeuvre.

«Michael came in and gave us his hand. He was like a perfumed calf, who snorted like a bull when he spoke. Groza began the conversation in a round-about way. This was intolerable to me,» said Dej, «but what could I do about it? At last, Groza got round to the theme and dropped 'the bomb-shell'. Michael listened and when Groza had finished he said bluntly: 'I have no intention of abdicating. I am king by the will of the people and only the people have the right to dethrone me,' etc., etc. The queen mother listened and nodded to her son, approving his decision.

«Groza began his 'politicking' again, but the 'bull' snorted and refused. His mother proposed we take a short break for the two sides to reflect. We did this and met again, and again the same arguments. Michael's mother, in her cunning way, tried to impose some concessions on us to postpone this unexpected thing for a while. We did not agree, but neither did they agree and after asking our permission, the king went outside. We racked our brains about why he went out, and we had reasons for this, because he had telephoned the guard, ordering them to arrest us as we left, and his forces, which were surrounding the palace and in the city, were to stage a putsch. However, we had foreseen this,» said Dej «and had established an encirclement of the encirclement.

«When the king returned to the chamber, I signalled to Groza to present him the document for his signature. Then, I began to speak,» said Dej, «and in a stern tone I told him that he had to sign the document, for otherwise we would overthrow him by force.

«You must have no illusions, must issue no orders,» I stressed to the king,» said Dej. «Anything you may attempt will be in vain, since we have taken all measures around the palace and the troops loyal to you.»

«He turned and twisted, but in the end he sat down and signed the abdication. Thus, the monarchy came to an end. The king, like a wounded bull, went out again, no doubt, to cancel the order he had given, and when we were leaving the palace on the stairs we saw those same officers, only no longer haughty, but in despair. Some were sitting on the steps, some had unbuttoned their uniforms and some were holding their heads in their hands. We passed through them,» said Dej, «with our heads high and the document in the briefcase.»

«A brilliant victory over a bankrupt king,» I said to myself when Dej proudly uttered these words. But he still hadn't finished with the history of the king and reaction.

«We reached agreement with him about the day of his departure from Rumania,» continued Dej, «and we permitted him to take what he wanted of his personal property and some people who served him, including two or three of his mistresses. Before he left, he asked to go to the Sinaia Palace to get some personal property. We permitted this. There he had collected a number of gold watches from which he took the gold cases and the rubies. We sent him by train outside our borders, accompanied by our guards. He and his suite did not speak while on Rumanian territory, but when the train passed into foreign territory, in the presence of our guards, he began to abuse us, our regime, the guards, etc. But there,» said Dej, «there was nothing we could do to him.»

«You should have done it when he was inside,» I told him, «but you let the 'bird' escape from your hands.»

«But we left nothing undone against him and reaction,»

said Dej boastfully, «we forced him to abdicate and depart defeated and disgraced (!). We have dealt roundly with reaction, too; reaction was arrogant, but we behaved arrogantly with it. Even when they were still powerful we challenged them. I myself with one guard,» boasted Dej, «went into all the cafés where they gathered and sat down with a pistol in my belt in order to let them know: 'We, the communists, are masters of the country and not you'.»

While listening to Dej, I made a comparison between us and them. Oh, how far we were removed from them! There the class struggle had still not begun. The story of King Michael, which Dej related to us at such length, showed the situation clearly. But we were to see this for ourselves even better and more concretely when we walked through some streets of Bucharest.

I said good night to Dej, and Chuvakin and I went up to the rooms allocated to us, because the next day Vyshinsky was to come and the meeting would commence.

My bed-room communicated with another room through a door. I opened it to make sure what was on the other side. It was a big room, completely empty, except for a table in one corner, on which lay a big luxurious book. I went to the table and turned over the pages of this book with a cover that looked like gold. It was a royal album! The whole dynasty of Rumanian kings, queens and princes was in it. I put the album under my arm and knocked on Chuvakin's door.

«I've brought you a book,» I told him, «because you may not have anything to read to put you to sleep. Dej's king took the watches but he forgot this. Look through it and give it to Dej tomorrow to send by post to Michael, because he needs it, while it wouldn't serve us even for toilet paper, since it's not suitable.» Chuvakin and I had a good laugh. The history of the king of Rumania was closed together with the album. One day later the history of the ascension of another new king. King Tito of Yugoslavia. would begin.

The following day Vyshinsky was to come from Moscow. The name and personality of Vyshinsky was great and well

known to all of us on account of the important role he had played as state prosecutor in the Moscow trials against Trotskyites, Bukharinites, rightists and other traitors of the Soviet Union. During the war I had got hold of a French translation of the account of the Moscow trials and had had the opportunity to study the evil activity and treachery of these sworn enemies of communism. Their guilt and secret collaboration with the foreign enemies of the Soviet Union was brought out clearly and completely exposed there. Everything was convincing. And the claims of foreign enemies that the admissions had been allegedly extorted from the criminals by torture were slanders. Our struggle against local enemies, the trials which were held in our country after the war against enemies of the people, the struggle which our Party had waged against Trotskyite elements further reinforced our belief in the justness of the merciless fight which the state in the Soviet Union had undertaken against these criminals.

When they held power, the foreign and internal enemies of our peoples employed the most inhuman forms and methods. But naturally the foreign enemies will defend their friends within our countries, while our duty has been and still is to suppress the enemies of the people and to give them no possibility to operate against the constructive work of the people.

This the Soviet state did through the Moscow trials. In these trials Andrey Vyshinsky, outstanding jurist and Marxist-Leninist, played an important role. He displayed skill, acumen, wisdom, courage and determination in this important task. Through his acumen and strong logic, on the basis of a profound dialectical Marxist-Leninist analysis, he uncovered all the obscure angles of problems, the intrigues and plans of the enemies who stood in the dock, as well as of the external enemies who pulled the strings of this terrible and dangerous agency. And it was precisely this unerring method of unravelling matters which astonished the external enemies and their espionage agencies about how their secret plans were discovered and compelled them to slander and

propagate that everything, every statement, every admission by the accused had «been extorted by means of torture, drugs,» etc.

We had gathered in one of the rooms of the palace, where we were staying, waiting for Vyshinsky. At last he came. I was excited because I was meeting him for the first time. (When I went to Moscow in July 1947, Vyshinsky was not in the Soviet Union.) He was just as I had heard, a vigorous man, not very tall, with horn-rimmed glasses and bright black eyes that took in everything. He was wearing a blue suit. Vyshinsky shook hands with all of us in turn and when he came to me, apparently as I was the only one he had not met before, he guessed who I was, because he gave me his hand and asked me in Russian:

«How is your health, Comrade Enver Hoxha?»

«*Harasho!*»^{*} I replied.

Meanwhile Chuvakin intervened and said:

«Comrade Enver speaks French well.» Then Vyshinsky started to speak to me in French and I could speak more freely.

We began the meeting which Dej opened with a short speech. He welcomed us to Bucharest and gave the floor to Vyshinsky.

He greeted us warmly and also transmitted the greetings of Stalin and other comrades of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPSU (b).

«The object of this meeting,» said Vyshinsky in general outline, «is to exchange our experience and reveal our joint knowledge about the betrayal of the Yugoslav Titoites, about their undermining activity against our countries, parties and socialism, and to define the method of combatting and unmasking their deviation which is dangerous for communism in general and for the Yugoslav Communist Party and socialism in Yugoslavia in particular.»

In the course of the analysis he made of the secret and

^{*} Well (Russ. in the original).

open activity of Tito's renegade group, Vyshinsky explained to us in detail the theoretical and political content of the letters of the Bolshevik Party to the CPY and the Resolution of the meeting of the Information Bureau on this important question. Our parties were acquainted with these documents which we had studied in detail and on which we had taken decisions, fully endorsing them.

With his penetrating style, with arguments and the amazing clarity characteristic of him, Vyshinsky, as the true bolshevik prosecutor that he was, made their content even clearer to us. This time we did not have the accused before us in the dock, but the fact is that their trial was being held and it was a fair trial, based on sound arguments, an historic trial the justice of which was to be completely confirmed by the passage of time.

Vyshinsky demonstrated to us with convincing historical facts that the political activity of Tito's renegade group was not something fortuitous and spontaneous. Despite their false appearance the views of Tito and his main associates were not those of formed Marxists. They posed as Marxists, as if they were in solidarity with the Soviet Union and Stalin, and in this way deceived the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav communists. However, during the war, on many occasions they showed obvious signs of a pronounced megalomania, bourgeois nationalist tendencies and an incorrect concept of the war of the Soviet Union and the aid which this war gave all the peoples, especially the peoples of Yugoslavia.

«The Bolshevik Party,» continued Vyshinsky in essence, «had sufficient experience to detect such tendencies, but did not consider them incurable. At that period the main issue was the war against the German nazis. And we understood that in the face of countless difficulties during the war, actions which were ill-considered and some times unclear would occur, but we thought that experience, the war and the passage of time would clear them up. Of course, with the victory,» he stressed, «our relations with the Yugoslavs would be closer and everything would be cleared up in a comradely way, even

though the Yugoslav leadership had created doubts in our relations. And this is what occurred. After the victory over Hitlerite Germany, the closest fraternal relations were established between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and important decisions were taken to give economic, military and political aid in the international arena to Yugoslavia, which we considered one of our most faithful political and ideological allies. There were no clouds apparent in the sky of our relations. The clouds were gathered one after the other by the Tito group when the political, economic, ideological and military construction of the PFR of Yugoslavia began. At that time the bourgeois nationalist and anti-Soviet tendencies of the renegade group of Tito became clearer.»

Vyshinsky went on to demonstrate to us how the Yugoslav renegade leaders attacked and distorted the basic, universal principles of Marxism-Leninism and disguised these deviations on the grounds that they were allegedly applying the Marxist-Leninist principles «in the concrete post-war conditions» of Yugoslavia.

«The question was not that everything should have been copied as it is in the Soviet Union,» Vyshinsky told us, «but they took this as a basis to attack the principles, to deviate from them. This, of course, was bound to lead to discussions, as it did, and in the end to differences between us.

«We defended the principles,» continued Vyshinsky, «they violated them more and more openly and grasped at the smallest things with which they tried to prove that our country was allegedly interfering in their internal affairs, that the Soviet Union was allegedly not assisting them economically as much as it should, and that we were allegedly not properly backing their political and territorial demands in the international arena. Of course, there was no foundation for any of these charges and we rejected them with facts and great patience. However, neither the principles nor the facts made any impression on them. The Yugoslav renegades proceeded towards an ideological and political line contrary to ours, they had set out on the rails of anti-Marxism. This compelled the

CPSU (b) to write the first letter and the subsequent ones to the CC of the CPY which we sent them some time ago. Our aim was that the Yugoslav Communist Party must be saved from catastrophe, should abandon the wrong course on which Tito was setting it and Yugoslavia should build socialism, avoiding the re-establishment of capitalism, towards which it was heading. The course which the Bolshevik Party adopted was the most comradely, Marxist-Leninist course in accordance with the rules, but the renegades rejected it.

«The question of Yugoslavia is an internal question of the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav communists,» continued Vyshinsky, «and we have not meddled and will not meddle in their internal affairs. We have no right to interfere, but it is our duty to ensure the political and ideological exposure of the activity of this clique which is fighting against Marxism-Leninism and serves world capitalism. Already,» continued Vyshinsky, «in the international arena and the internal plane the Titoites present themselves as open enemies of the Soviet Union and their activities in this direction will increase, not only against us, but also against all the countries of people's democracy and the socialist camp. Their activity is identical with the activities of the Trotskyites, Bukharinites and agents of world capital whom we have unmasked in our trials.

«The unmasking of the enemy has very great importance,» stressed Vyshinsky. «The Soviet peoples had to be convinced of the treacherous activity of the Trotskyites, the Bukharinites and the rightists, therefore we placed importance on this and managed to achieve that our enemies themselves brought out the smallest details which are frequently important because they explain major questions. The truth which proved their treachery emerged naked before our courts and our peoples. This had decisive importance. This is the important thing to achieve,» said Vyshinsky. «After this the number of years to which the enemy is sentenced has secondary importance. The people must approve this sentence, must be convinced. This is what we must do with Tito's

renegade group, too. This group is in power and will defend itself. It will also commit all sorts of provocations against our socialist states, but we must be prudent, vigilant and must not fall for their provocations!» he concluded.

In his speech Dej, amongst other things, pointed out the great danger of this agency of criminals and murderers; made an interpretation of the joint decisions which they had taken in the Information Bureau, told of the arrogance of the Yugoslav «comrades» at this meeting against the French and Italian communist parties, etc. Amongst other things, he mentioned some episodes from his first official visit to Yugoslavia, and his first meeting with Tito.

«Tito behaved with us in a disdainful way and this he showed from the first meetings,» said Dej, «He wanted to under-rate our National Liberation War, received us with great pomp in order to overawe us with his uniforms, his decorations, the rings on his fingers and his palaces. Seeing such a situation,» said Dej, «I 'took my courage in both hands' and said to Tito in conversation: 'Both you and I are workers and communists. Let us speak simply and directly about the problems which worry us,' etc. And he pretended to agree,» continued Dej, «but the luxurious life of a megalomaniacal anti-Marxist and bourgeois that he lived had become a living reality and he could not break away from that way of life. Matters had gone so far,» said Dej, «that Tito took me and the foreign minister of Rumania (who was a bourgeois and was removed and condemned later) to visit his stable. Tito, dressed in a black uniform with high boots and his chest covered with decorations, led the way. When we approached the horse-boxes,» pointed out Dej, «he shouted to one of his officers *šećer-šećer* and the officer brought a great dish of sugar into which Tito thrust his fist and gave it to the horses to eat from his hand.

«When we parted from Tito and left that place,» continued Dej, «in the car my foreign minister said to me in confidence: 'Comrade Dej, Dimitrov is a communist and a fine man, but with Tito one could go to the end in com-

munism.' That is the price the bourgeois put on Tito,* concluded Dej.

I, too, took the floor. I had a lot to say about the Titoites. In our relations with the traitor group of Belgrade there were loads of facts and data which proved their betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and the openly state capitalist and colonialist tendencies in the relations which they tried to establish in our country.

I pointed out to the comrades, amongst other things, that our contacts and relations with the Yugoslavs, which began during the National Liberation War, at first through political and party channels, later, especially from the end of the War onwards, were developed in all directions, taking into account the circumstances which were created by our common war against the same enemy and the formation of our states of people's democracy. I presented the participation of our National Liberation Partisan Army in the war for the liberation of Yugoslavia correctly and objectively, as an honourable, correct and undeniable act, which had a truly liberation character, but always remained an aid, alongside the Yugoslav National Liberation Army which for its part, fought heroically. This must not be denied or underrated, irrespective of the fact that the Tito group betrayed the blood shed by this heroic army which bore the brunt in the liberation of the peoples of Yugoslavia.

After telling them about the true role of Miladin Popović and Dušan Mugoša with theoretical and practical arguments, I refuted the absurd anti-Marxist claim that allegedly the Yugoslavs had created our Party, that allegedly they had «kindled the fire of our national liberation war».

Of course these anti-Marxist, nationalist views of «domination» had cropped up amongst them during the war. But they assumed provocative proportions especially on the eve of Liberation and after Liberation.

«I must point out,» I told the comrades, «that our contacts with the Yugoslavs during the war were rare, and moreover, when we managed to meet (and I told them about

the meetings with Vukmanović-Tempo and Blažo Jovanović), we had differences over principles with them on many issues, since even at that time the Yugoslav tendencies to consider and use our Party as an appendage of their party, and Albania as a province of Yugoslavia were already apparent. Of course the smoke from these anti-Marxist views emerged a little later.

«We, for our part, have always considered our war in unity with that of the peoples of Yugoslavia. This was a major duty of ours as Marxist-Leninists, not only because we were fighting for liberation against the same enemy, but also because through the militant friendship between our two peoples we sought whole-heartedly to wipe out forever those feelings which the circumstances of past periods, such as the partitioning of Albania, the leaving of Kosova to Serbia, the ceaseless terror and countless intrigues of the Serbs against our country had created.

«We, for our part, did everything we could, while the Yugoslavs at every stage of the development of this false friendship on their part hatched up plots and back-stage conspiracies for the domination of Albania immediately after the war.»

With arguments I outlined to Vyshinsky and the other comrades the preparation of the putsch at the Berat Plenum, which failed, the countless efforts at the beginning of Liberation to discredit the leadership of our Party and our line on the war, by creating their agency within our leadership with Koçi Xoxe, whom they supported with all their might and set the task of seizing power and operating and applying the «line» of the Yugoslav Titoites in our country. I explained to the comrades the essence of this Yugoslav line, which squarely proved that the Yugoslav leadership was anti-Marxist, bourgeois, nationalist, chauvinist, anti-Soviet and anti-Albanian. I went on to inform them about the Yugoslavs' hostile activity in our country in every field, one by one, demonstrating this with many arguments backed by concrete facts which were indisputable and not in the least equivocal.

«On ideological matters and on the organization of our Party,» I told the comrades, «during the war, but especially after the war, the Titoites tried with all their means to impose the organizational forms of their party on us and to divert us from the Marxist-Leninist line on the structure of the party and its correct thought and action. They did everything in their power to keep us isolated from the experience of the Bolshevik Party, with which we acquainted ourselves through the documents of that party which came into our hands and from the opinions we exchanged with the Soviet diplomats, because,» I told Vyshinsky, «we still had not established direct relations with the CC of the CPSU in order to exchange party experience. This came about not through any fault or lack of desire on our part, but, in general, this was the reality. Despite this lack, our Party did not budge from this orientation. The Yugoslavs, who considered this very harmful and dangerous for their diabolical plan, and finding it impossible at that time to conduct an open propaganda against the Marxist-Leninist principles which guided our Party, against close principled ideological and organizational links with the Bolshevik Party, undertook their assault against the correct general line of our Party. Koçi Xoxe, as the leader of the anti-party group, became a complete supporter of the Yugoslav Titoites. He was inflated by them with ultra-leftist and Trotskyite terms, was called 'the proletarian conscience' of our Party, hence 'the most trusted, loyal and proletarian leader of the Party'. With these activities the Yugoslav Titoites and the Titoite group of Koçi Xoxe wanted to create the belief that now our Party was on 'the true Marxist-Leninist rails', not only because it was led by 'proletarian elements', but also because it was inspired by the CPY. Through this group and Koçi Xoxe, who at Berat, on the insistence of the Yugoslavs, assumed the function of the organizational secretary of the Party, as well as that of the minister of internal affairs a grave situation was created in our Party and in our state.»

I went on to tell the comrades: «As well as all the other

parts, we read carefully also those parts of the letters of the Bolshevik Party in which the Yugoslav anti-Marxist practices of the organizational secretary of the party also being minister of internal affairs, the keeping of the Party in a semi-illegal situation, etc. were criticized. These alien practices and forms were imposed on us, too, by the Yugoslav leadership, and in the analyses that we are making, new grave facts are emerging about the dangerous consequences which these practices have brought in our Party and state. Very soon this situation will come to an end, just as every shred of the influence which Tito and his supporters in our ranks have managed to impose on us is coming to an end. We have fought ceaselessly against all these deviations by the Yugoslav Titoites and their secret agency in our Party,» I continued, «but understandably, to the extent we were able, because we had to rely solely on our own reasoned judgments and our conviction that we were on the right course. What we knew of Marxism-Leninism, we defended fanatically, and we have never abandoned the experience of the CP of the Soviet Union.»

In a round-about way I let Vyshinsky know that we had not been given direct aid from the CPSU and also alluded to other problems, that the Soviet comrades with whom we had direct contact, whom we informed about everything, listened to us, assisted us in those fields in which they were specialists, but never expressed any opinion in reference to our contradictions with the Yugoslavs. In our presence they posed as neutral on these questions and we did not know what they reported to Moscow.

«Another matter which confused us to some extent,» I pointed out, «was that for a long time our suspicions about the hostile actions of the Yugoslavs did not extend to the top, to Tito, and the whole of their leadership. In this direction it must be admitted that we were not given any information about whether the sister parties had ever drawn the attention of the Yugoslav leadership to its incorrect stands. Indeed, this situation continued right to recent weeks or

months, when the letters of the Bolshevik Party, which criticized the Yugoslav leadership, reached us. Before these letters the only signal that things were not going well,» I told them, «was given us when we informed Comrade Stalin about the question of the Yugoslav division which Tito wanted to deploy on our territory. We had opposed Tito's demand and when the Soviet reply reached us, we were convinced that we had acted correctly.»

«Stalin personally criticized Tito for this impermissible act which he wanted to commit against you,» said Vyshinsky.

«This rejoices us immensely,» I told Vyshinsky, «but through the Soviet embassy I was told only that Stalin agreed with our opinions and not with those of Tito and that was all. However, I think that I and the comrades of our leadership could and should have been told something more, should have been told why Tito did these things.

«A similar thing occurred,» I pointed out to the comrades, «over another question, that of the so-called 'Balkan Federation' or 'Confederation', allegedly proposed and settled between Tito and Dimitrov, about which we were never given any information.

«To this very day,» I continued, «we cannot say precisely what this thing was, how it came about, and approval from us was neither sought nor received. Only at the beginning of this year we learned at one moment that the Moscow newspaper 'Pravda' criticized this 'idea' of Dimitrov's and he replied to Stalin and 'Pravda' that they were right, that in the existing conditions the idea of a 'Balkan Federation' was impossible and incorrect.»

While pointing out that behind the efforts for a «Balkan Federation» lurked the chauvinist aims of the Tito clique to dominate the Balkans, I outlined to the comrades the anti-Marxist chauvinist policy pursued by the Belgrade leadership towards Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia, both during and after the war.

After speaking about our correct principled stand towards this painful problem of our nation, I went on to tell the

comrades about the pressure exerted on us by the Yugoslavs and Kogi Xoxe to accept the union of Albania with Yugoslavia and about our categorical opposition to this proposal.

«However,» I emphasized again, «on these capital problems of such importance for the fate of our Homeland and people we acted on our own initiative. With our unshakeable conviction we heroically defended the freedom and independence of our Homeland,» and I let Vyshinsky know that at these important moments we were not assisted as much as we should have been, that is, we found ourselves alone.

I remember that at this point Vyshinsky interrupted me and said:

«People are tempered in struggle!»

I went on to tell them about our army, how we created it, and what «aid» the Yugoslavs gave us for this, and dwelt at somewhat greater length on the Yugoslavs' «economic aid».

«The culmination of this chauvinist, colonialist and annexationist policy of the Yugoslav revisionists against our country,» I told them, «was the treaties on 'the planned joint economy', 'the joint companies', 'the parity of the currencies', etc., etc.»

I told the comrades at the meeting about all these diabolical mechanisms and aims of the Yugoslav anti-Marxists, about our resistance and struggle against them, and finally about our triumph and the defeat of the conspiratorial work of Tito and company.

My speech at the meeting, which was fairly lengthy, and all those facts which I presented to them very clearly confirmed the treachery of the Titoites and the correctness of the views of Stalin expressed in the letters sent to the CPY. On the other hand, those facts testified to the correct struggle of our Party for the defence of the interests of our Homeland, of internationalism, of friendship with the Soviet Union and to our loyalty to Stalin. In the meeting I made it quite clear to the comrades present that during this struggle our Party had very frequently found itself alone, and therefore, needed

to be and should have been helped to a greater extent, more openly and with greater trust.

As soon as I had finished, we took a break, after which Vyshinsky gave the conclusions of the meeting. He described that meeting as very positive, necessary and valuable.

«We learned many things which will help us,» he said in essence, «in the continuation of the struggle for the exposure of this clique of renegades.»

Vyshinsky went on to say among other things:

«The clear presentation of matters, supported by facts on the part of Comrade Enver Hoxha made very clear to us a series of base actions of the Yugoslav anti-Marxists and the facts and events which were brought forward at this meeting, prove that the things the Yugoslavs have done towards the Communist Party of Albania and the People's Republic of Albania are conscious actions against socialism and our common ideology.

«We are not mistaken in the estimation we have made of the activity of these renegades and draw conclusions that this is a protracted political and ideological struggle. The Bolshevik Party,» said Vyshinsky, «approves the correct actions and persistent struggle in defence of Marxism-Leninism by the Communist Party of Albania, its Central Committee and Comrade Enver Hoxha. We must bear in mind,» he continued, «that this clique will go even further in its hostile actions against our socialist camp. The Titoites will commit many provocations of all kinds, in order to justify themselves and put the blame on us. They will commit these provocations to deceive opinion inside and outside Yugoslavia and to justify their policy of betrayal and links with the capitalist states.

«This requires that we must always be vigilant, must safeguard and strengthen our Marxist-Leninist unity, love for and loyalty to Stalin,» stressed Vyshinsky. «We are not afraid of these dregs of our society who are doomed to disappear into the rubbish bin of history. We must make the relations between our parties and socialist states even

stronger and must help one another more. I stress,» said Vyshinsky finally, «that it is our duty as friends, as comrades, and as internationalists to help the PR of Albania more, so that it makes up for the time lost, improves its economic situation, and we must not forget, either, that now it is completely encircled by enemy states. The sister Republic of Albania is a worthy member of our powerful socialist camp, therefore, it never should feel itself isolated, and will never be isolated either politically, economically, ideologically or militarily. This is the instruction of Comrade Stalin.

«In regard to our future stand towards the leadership in Belgrade,» concluded Vyshinsky, «we must display great care and through mature and principled stands bring about that any attempt or provocation of Tito's fails, and avoid giving him the possibility on any occasion to accuse us of stands and actions alien to our socialist ideology and policy. In the direction of Albania, in particular, Tito's provocations may be greater and more severe, because, as Comrade Enver said, apart from other things, between the two countries there is still the unsolved problem of Kosova and other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia. From there Tito can hatch up all sorts of traps, therefore, through vigilance and maturity we must ensure that he is thwarted in such manoeuvres, as he has been up till now.»

Later, during my second and third visit to the Soviet Union¹, the great Stalin personally was to express his concern for vigilance and care in regard to any provocation of the Titoites especially in connection with Kosova.

In one of the unforgettable conversations with him, after I told him about our protracted battle with the leadership of Belgrade, and about many problems, including that of Kosova, amongst other things I said:

«Without ever interfering in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, we, for our part, will never cease supporting the rights of our brothers of the same blood in Yugoslavia, will

¹ In March-April and in November 1949.

raise our voice against the terror and the policy of extermination which the Tito-Ranković clique¹ pursues towards them.»

Stalin listened to me attentively and, when I had finished, said:

«In the future, too, as Marxist-Leninists, we must attack the anti-Marxist actions and views of Tito and the Yugoslav leadership, but I stress that we must not in any way interfere in their internal affairs. This would not be Marxist. The Yugoslav communists and the peoples of Yugoslavia must see to this matter, it is up to them to solve the problems of their present and future. This is the context in which I see the problem of Kosova and the other Albanian population living on their own lands in Yugoslavia. We must not leave the Titoite enemy any way to make the accusation that we are allegedly waging our struggle to break up the Yugoslav Federation. This is a delicate matter and must be treated with very great care...»²

But let us return to the meeting with Vyshinsky and Dej in Bucharest, which, as I said, began and ended with success.

I was very satisfied, first, because matters were made clear to us, but also because of the good assessment which Vyshinsky made of the work of our Party.

After dinner at which toasts were drunk, Vyshinsky, who was very intelligent and with great humour, cracked many jokes. When we embraced on parting, he said to me:

«Au revoir in Moscow!» (In fact, I met Vyshinsky later in Moscow on two or three occasions, when I went officially or for holidays to the Soviet Union.)

I retain very good memories and have a special admiration for his great intelligence and acumen, for his Bolshevik determination and loyalty to the great Stalin. He loved Albania, interested himself in our situation, and always asked me about it whenever we met. At one dinner which he gave

1 See Enver Hoxha, «With Stalin» (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, p. 141, 2nd Eng. ed.

2 Ibidem.

for our official delegation, he created a very intimate and happy atmosphere. Many comrades of the Political Bureau of the CPSU, headed by Molotov, were present, and amidst the rejoicing, the comrades of our embassy brought me a telegram with the happy news about the birth of my first child and that mother and son were very well. Of course, we drank a bit that night and one could do nothing else with the Soviet comrades who liked to drink. They told Vyshinsky about the birth of my son and he immediately approached me, shook my hand and congratulated me saying: «My heartfelt congratulations on the son that is born. May he have a long life!» On the following day they told Stalin, too, at an unforgettable reception which he organized for us, about the birth of my son.¹

Another time when I had a meeting with Vyshinsky to talk about the international situation and the stands which our delegations would take in the UNO on various problems, during the talk he offered me a drink saying:

«I know that you do drink a little because I noticed it at the reception.»

I replied that I did not like to drink at all, that I only smoked, but I had drunk a bit at that reception, because I had had so much to rejoice over. I noticed that he did not insist, as the other Soviet comrades did, that I should drink, but he himself did not drink, either.

«It's not the habit of the Russians to clink glasses with *borzhom**,» said Vyshinsky. «I am a Russian, but I have diabetes, and liquor is banned for me.»

«You stick to the rules as you do in everything,» I said, «but I wish you good health and a very long life.»

Later, when I heard of Vyshinsky's death, I was very grieved. I shall never forget this great Stalinist statesman who, not only as a prosecutor, not only as a jurist, but also as a diplomat proved himself to be of a very high calibre.

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «With Stalin» (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, p. 123, 2nd Eng. ed.

* Mineral water (Rus. in the original).

His speeches at the UNO as Foreign Minister and representative of the Soviet Union are landmarks in the history of international relations. His speeches are masterpieces of defence of the Stalinist line and merciless political and ideological exposure of the imperialist policy with exemplary and powerful Marxist-Leninist logic. Vyshinsky was a brilliant debator. The enemies trembled at his words, because he was right, because he brought up countless facts, and facts are stubborn. He knew how to use his facts and documents with rare mastery, because he was a Bolshevik, a loyal pupil of Lenin and Stalin. But let us return to the meeting in Bucharest and say «farewell» to Dej.

The day after the meeting, Chuvakin and I asked Dej for permission to go to visit the city of Bucharest by car and on foot. Dej agreed to our proposal with pleasure. Apparently, the «illegality» of my visit had been lifted. After breakfast we climbed into cars and set out on the excursion. We drove all round Bucharest, stopped on the edge of some very beautiful lakes, of which there were many in Bucharest, surrounded with trees and flowers. Around one of them stood beautiful villas, residences, and another royal palace. The Rumanian bourgeoisie oppressed the people and enjoyed a prosperous life, amusing itself at the expense of the blood of this people. Rumania was a wealthy country, exported grain, while the people did not have bread to eat. Rumania had resources of oil and was noted for the famous Ploest oil-field, but this wealth belonged to the Rumanian bourgeoisie and foreign oil companies.

In the past Rumania had highly developed trade with the various capitalist countries, and the many-sided relations with these countries, the influence of capitalism and the capitalist way of life had introduced political and moral degeneration to this country. Corruption, bribery, cabarets, transactions, prevailed here. Even merchants of Albanian origin, especially from Korça, had established themselves in Rumania. Some of them had become relatively wealthy. Families from Korça had emigrated to find work or because of

the persecution by the Greeks. This small colony of Albanians, which was very active, with patriotic and militant sentiments for the cause of the liberation of Albania, became one of the most fiery centres for the national cause, from which emerged many outstanding men like Viktor Eftimiu and others, who were progressive and with rare talents.

The Rumanians called Bucharest «the little Paris». I had read Paul Morand's¹ book about Bucharest. As I said above, when you looked at the city, you formed the impression that it had never seen the war, as if it had not been hit by the smallest bomb during the Second World War. There was no damage, no ruins to be seen. But what of our poverty-stricken cities! They had been bombed and devastated by the Italians, the Germans, and even by the British «allies». It seemed that here in Bucharest the Germans had done no fighting at all, but had just raised their hands in the air.

When we came to the most beautiful and busiest street of Bucharest, where business was brisk, we got off the cars and walked. A member of the Central Committee and five or six security men accompanied us.

What there was to see! The shops were full of strikingly luxurious goods; every shop contained such goods of a particular speciality such as marten and fox, and all kinds of other luxurious furs; there were shops full of luxurious shoes, marvellous porcelain ware, fabrics, ready-made clothes, book-shops. All the showcases were aglow with luxury and sensational advertisements. It seemed as if you were not in a city which had just emerged from the war, but in Champs Elysées of pre-war Paris. And all the shops were still the property of the Rumanian bourgeoisie, were in its hands, it made the law in commerce. Chuvakin and I looked at the shopwindows with curiosity and astonishment. As always I thought of the empty shops in Tirana, while Chuvakin thought of those in Moscow which certainly were not full of goods like these. We asked the Rumanian comrade who accompanied us:

1 French writer.

«Do these shops belong to the state?»

«No, they have not been nationalized yet,» he replied. «But, please, let us go into one of the shops and have a look inside.»

He begged us to go inside whenever we stopped to look in a window, but we did not fulfil his desire. Later we understood what the Rumanian comrade had on his mind. He had received an order from Dej that we were to choose what we wanted in the shops we entered and he was not to allow us to pay. These things were to be gifts for us from the CC of the WP of Rumania. In the end we went into one shop which the comrade told us was partly owned by the state. It was a big luxurious shop. We went in, of course, to have a look, to please the Rumanian comrade, who was wearing himself out begging us, and not to buy. We noticed that he took the manager of the shop aside and certainly gave him the order to serve us. Then, he and the salesman did their best to press many things on us, but we did not accept all they offered us. I chose a paper-knife, a pair of office scissors to open books and a leather compendium for my desk. Chuvakin, too, chose much the same things. We fulfilled the Rumanian comrade's desire!

When we came out of the shop we went into a big café and sat down to rest. There were many people there, strikingly well-dressed. They looked us over curiously from the corner of their eyes; they did not know us, but certainly recognized the security men who accompanied us. This was one of those cafés which Dej told us were frequented by the bourgeoisie, where he «with his revolver in his belt and surrounded by security men went to provoke them within their own lairs».

He went and «provoked» them in cafés, indeed! But what harm did such a thing do them when they had the economy, the market, their wealth in their hands? This scandalized me and I wondered: What sort of communists are they? What sort of socialism is this?

Only a few years later they were to show completely what their worth was — Dej, this «stern fighter» against Tito,

was the first to become the defender and the supporter of Tito as soon as Khrushchev turned over the page.

When we returned to the Palace for the farewell dinner with the Rumanian comrades (because the next day we were to return to the Homeland), in the course of conversation I spoke about the very good impressions we had of Rumania, of the people, the individuals, but I also spoke about our experience and I expressed my astonishment in the form of a question:

«Why do you not expropriate the bourgeoisie, but allow them to exploit the people?» Dej explained to me that «everything will be done in its own time, because the situation here is different from that in your country,» and other such theories.

The following day we parted from Dej and Anna Pauker and the other Rumanian comrades who saw us off at the airport.

New battles were awaiting us. With the experience of a struggle over many years, with the things that we learned and were made clear to us at this meeting, we had to carry the struggle against the Trotskyite deviation of Tito and against his agents in our ranks through to the end.

The end of the Titoites in our country

The immediate and ignominious departure of Tito's emissaries from our country after the arrival of the first letter of the Bolshevik Party, amongst other things, brought two important consequences for our Party. The first consequence was positive: when they saw that their masters had left them in the lurch and at the mercy of the development of events, Koçi Xoxe and his Titoite clan (up till yesterday predominant in the Bureau) immediately turned their coats and became «pro-Soviet», expressed unanimous «solidarity» with the letter

of the CC of the CPSU to the Titoite leadership! This was in our interest, because the majority of the leadership of the Party and the Party itself (when it was told) would truly express whole-hearted solidarity with Stalin's first letter (and with the others), but it would not be good at all for our Party if even three or four voices were to be raised against this general stand.

However, linked with this first positive consequence, the second consequence was to come, and this would be extremely negative for our work: being obliged to express «solidarity» with the letters of the CC of the CPSU and with all the Marxist-Leninist analyses which we would develop in the light of our events, Koçi Xoxe and his gang would try to camouflage themselves, to cover their tracks, to present themselves, at the most, as «mistaken», as «influenced», and not as they were in fact — recruited agents of Titoite revisionism.

In no way, however, could we allow the evil to go on existing in the sound body of our Party. It had to be uncovered, eradicated and rejected, not only because of the great damage it had brought us in the past, but also for the sake of the future. If we were to show ourselves liberal, blind, or soft with it, then in the future, as soon as the conditions were created, this evil would try to regain its lost positions and to overthrow the Party.

Thus, began that long process of work, profound analyses and discussion which took up the whole period from April-May to November of 1948. During this period an intensive struggle was waged, meetings and debates went on ceaselessly for whole days and nights. Frequently, when it was obvious that the situation was becoming clear, suddenly new facts and arguments would be brought out, which impelled us to begin the analyses all over again. It was not easy to unmask the enemies in the leadership of the Party all at once. They had been through the Tito-Ranković «school» and their direct participation in the plot had made them masters of duplicity and deception.

The arch-agent, Koçi Xoxe, in particular, would try to

twist and manoeuvre in a thousand and one ways to save, if not all, at least as much as he could, of his black past.

When he read the letters, after a phase in which he was dumbfounded and hesitant, when he realized that matters would be gone into deeply, he changed his tactic, began to be «astonished» and «angry» about the things which Tito and company had put upon us!

He had become like a wild beast stunned after the first and sudden blow which his masters had received, although he himself had still not been attacked, and indeed at first we never even said a word to him about his part in the Mafia. The great shock which he suffered at those moments his stunned confusion, were further great proof for us that we had to do with one of the most dangerous enemies. Precisely when he expected to seize complete power, when he thought that no serious obstacle was left in front of him, that is, precisely at the moment when he expected to receive the crown, like a bolt from the blue he received a sudden and devastating blow which finally swept from his hands everything he had dreamed of and prepared for openly and secretly for a long time. On such occasions enemy elements and conspirators at first fall into a real state of shock and paralysis, while little by little they recover themselves and do everything in their power to clutch at a straw, to save themselves from drowning in the filthy mire in which they have immersed themselves.

This was occurring also with Xoxe, the «hero» of the 8th Plenum, who changed his tactic and expressed «solidarity» with the letters of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but who tried to manoeuvre, suggested that we should limit ourselves simply to solidarity with them and unanimously «approve» only what was said in the letters. However, I did not allow him to deceive himself with vain hopes.

«Stalin's letters are a great help to us,» I told him quietly but sternly. «We shall study the problems which are raised there, but the main thing that we must do is to examine them in the light of our own affairs, our relations, our wounds in

the light of these problems, because the wounds from the blows which Tito and company dealt us are still open on our backs. Don't forget what sort of situation we were in,» I stressed deliberately. «If any minor opposition were raised to some Yugoslav technician, let alone describing them as enemies, immediately someone in the Bureau would say, 'We must look into this question because it is anti-Yugoslavism.' Is that not so?!»

«Yes, yes, that's how far things had gone!» he said in a meek voice and I saw the expression of his face change.

«All these things that have occurred during these last 4 or 5 years in our Party and in the leadership,» I told him, «show that we have had not only pressure and blackmail from the Tito clique, but also responses, indeed strong responses to that blackmail.»

«I don't say, I don't say that we have not opposed them when the occasion arose, but we have not described them as enemies and traitors as they are. The letters of the Bolshevik Party... opened our eyes..., we must look into the problem, must look into it more extensively,» he said, «because there are things which will be of great value to the Bolshevik Party and the Cominform!»

«Yes!» I cut him short. «They certainly will be of value to them, but in the first place they will be of value to us, to our Party, to the road we have followed, to the clashes we have had, to the good things and the mistakes, to the past, the present and the future. And we have many things to re-examine, to say, to analyse and decide. Everything which has been violated and distorted by the Yugoslavs, under the influence of the Yugoslavs or in agreement with the Yugoslavs, must be restored to order, the causes must be found, the roots distinguished and the evil must be forcibly eradicated and rejected with determination.

«One thing is more than clear,» I pointed out to him looking at him hard, «they have not worked alone in their anti-Albanian operation. Long ago they created their bases

of secret supporters within our ranks. We must bear this well in mind in the analyses we are going to begin.»

He scowled and began to stutter.

«That is right, mistakes have been made,» he said after a moment in which he pulled himself together. «We must look into these matters thoroughly, thoroughly,» he continued with his eyes on the ground. «We have been infected a bit with this evil, but... from the great trust we had in those dogs. We trusted them as if there were no one like them. Here we made a mistake, and I agree that we must look into it, as a party and as a leadership.»

«We are going to look into it,» I told him, «in the Party and in the leadership, but never confusing the Party or even the whole of its leadership with what you call the infection! The infected must come out and tell us why. It is they who must render account and if they don't we shall demand it from them in the way the accounting is required. We don't confuse either the Party or its leadership with them.»

These «free» conversations with Koçi Xoxe had great importance and I conducted them cautiously, because we were on the eve of the opening of the discussion and analyses in the Political Bureau. As I have described above, the Political Bureau, especially after the 8th Plenum, virtually did not function as a top organ of the Party. The Koçi Xoxe wing predominated in it, and this might now constitute a danger of confusion or wrong orientation, especially at the first moments. Hence, it had importance that Xoxe himself should come out «in solidarity» with the letters of the Bolshevik Party, irrespective of the sinister aims which would be hidden behind this «solidarity». Pandi Kristo, Kristo Themelko, Nesti Kerenxhi and so on would follow their master and then the tangle would begin to come apart itself. Even those who saw the danger to themselves in this new turn of events could not come out against the general opinion. They were bound to express their solidarity with the letters, as they did, would twist and turn to get off as lightly as possible and to

throw the main blame on the others, but in the end, on the basis of all the rules of democracy re-established in the Party, their dirty linen would be uncovered, bit by bit.

Right from the opening of the analyses in the Bureau, I considered it necessary that the spirit of the discussion should be orientated in the most correct way.

«Our Party,» I said to the comrades, «is one of those parties which can and must testify strongly and with many arguments to the existence of grave deviations and mistakes in the CC of the CP of Yugoslavia. I personally, and I believe you, too, feel deeply that the principled criticisms of the Bolshevik Party are correct and, although those criticisms are not aimed at us, I think that we must thoroughly examine and analyse our work to its foundations. We must be conscious that the Trotskyites of Belgrade, headed by Tito, have tried to peddle to us many of those mistakes and distortions that the Bolshevik Party pointed out and to impose them on us. The fact is that the Yugoslav leadership has tried to introduce military methods in the leadership of our Party, to split the leadership, to peddle to us forms of opportunism which were intended to weaken the Party and our People's Republic, to peddle to us organizational forms which suppressed the internal democracy of the Party, which strangled criticism and self-criticism, etc. It went as far as plans for military occupation, that is, to impose itself on us by military force. True, these anti-Marxist views have not become established in our Party but some of them, especially of an organizational character, have been imposed on us to one extent or another. We have no reason to hide these things, but on the contrary, must acknowledge them honestly, we must determine precisely to what extent they have penetrated and struggle to eliminate them immediately, along with the external factors and, especially the internal factors, which have made their penetration possible.

«This,» I told the comrades, «must be one of the directions of our analyses. However,» I continued, «we cannot allow matters to rest at that. The harmful and anti-Albanian activity

of the Yugoslav leaders has been exercised against us for years on end in other fields and with numerous anti-Marxist forms and methods which, understandably, the Bolshevik Party perhaps has not known and does not know. In our analyses we must weigh everything up on the balance of Marxism-Leninism. The time has come for the truth to be brought to light, for many things to be re-examined from the beginning and for justice to be restored wherever it has been violated. We have no reason to be afraid of such analyses, no reason to be afraid of criticism or self-criticism. From all these things the Party will emerge a thousand times stronger and healthier and our sacred cause will be carried forward with greater confidence.»

The meetings of the Political Bureau devoted to this problem in April, May and June 1948 were developed in this way, in the spirit of solidarity with the letters of the Bolshevik Party, as well as by bringing out numerous facts and arguments about the anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian activities of the chiefs in Belgrade against our Party and country.

As a result of this, after the 9th Plenum of the CC of the CPA when we openly denounced the anti-Marxist leadership of Belgrade, we were completely prepared to reply at the proper time and with the proper force to the campaign of slanders and denigration which Tito and company launched against us.

But this first phase of our general attack against Titoite revisionism prepared all the conditions to advance further in the final exposure and unmasking of the agents of Belgrade within our own ranks.

As I said, after they expressed their «solidarity» *en bloc* with the letters of the Bolshevik Party, willy-nilly, these agents were involved in all the analyses which we made. The total defeat they had suffered, their fear of the disclosure of the truth which they were hiding, their efforts to cover their tracks, automatically made Koçi Xoxe and company perform a «service» to our future, right from the first phase of the attack: they brought to light many facts and arguments which

provided even better confirmation of the interference and hostile pressure of Tito and his emissaries against our Party and country. These facts were extremely grave and we could not have known all of them earlier, because only the agents of Belgrade had knowledge of them. Now, in the context of «reflecting», of «assessing the past in a new light», they tried, sometimes for purposes of skilful camouflage and sometimes purely from their confusion and fear, to make themselves out «anti-Titoites»! To hear them competing to «uncover the background of Titoism» you would think that you could hardly find «more devoted anti-Titoites»! What a pity that such men «remembered» so late «to look straight at the truth»!

They might well have been branded with their true names right at the start, but in the first phase it was better to let them express themselves freely! In this phase let them spread the grave burden of responsibility for the unpardonable mistakes and distortions over «everyone»! For the time being, the main thing was to bring out clearly this responsibility, to present to everybody the whole baggage of the Titoite filth, to convince everybody with the maximum number of arguments about what a dangerous and menacing phase the hostile activity of the chiefs of Belgrade against us had reached!

Precisely this wise and cautious work which we did in the Political Bureau during April, May and June brought about that the 9th Plenum of the CC of the CPA took place in a lofty party spirit and the unity of thought and deed of our whole Central Committee was outstanding there. This same spirit characterized the whole Party and people when they were informed about the denunciation and unmasking of the chiefs in Belgrade through the communiqué of the CC of the CPA on July 1, 1948.

Our struggle against Titoism, against its pressure and influence within our ranks, advanced to a new phase. The mass of facts which were pouring in from all sides still had its own importance, but the main thing now was that the

conspiratorial elements should be finally uncovered and exposed and should render account for the crimes they had committed against the Party and the people.

In July I presented the problem quite openly:

«The immediate solidarity and enthusiasm with which the Party and our people have welcomed the communiqué of the Central Committee, the universal indignation against the intense and unrestrained anti-Albanian activity of the chiefs of Belgrade must be evaluated correctly and thoroughly. In regard to us they demonstrate two truths in particular: first, that as a result of the activity, blackmail and pressure of the Yugoslavs, mistakes and distortions have been permitted amongst us, too, and second, these mistakes and distortions which have been permitted are by no means the responsibility of the whole Party or its whole leadership. The general enthusiasm which has burst out and the indignation which is being displayed towards the evil activity of Tito and company cannot be explained otherwise. The time has come, comrades, to dwell concretely on the responsibilities of each of us. It would be unpardonable to lay the burden of the responsibility for the mistakes on the backs of all.»

Understandably this was the most delicate and difficult phase of uncovering and cleaning up the evil. True, the conspirators were confused and on the defensive, but they would continue to defend themselves, to hide their tracks and would try to mislead us.

At first, as a result of arguments and facts which I, Hysni Kapo, Gogo Nushi and, up to a point, also Bedri Spahiu and Tuk Jakova presented against Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and Kristo Themelko, they, with their backs to the wall, were forced to admit only one mistake.

«We have been 'more heavily influenced',» said Pandi Kristo, «but we did not know that the Yugoslav leaders were enemies.»

We presented new facts and arguments (they had to do with the whole mass of problems that I described above), but the three still stuck to their story:

«That we were influenced easily and more than the others, this we admit,» spluttered Xoxe. «Indeed, we admit that we did not go very deeply into the things that the Yugoslavs taught us, but we did not do this deliberately. We made a mistake and that's all there is to it.»

But the moment came when the block was split. After a series of hesitations and vacillations, Kristo Themelko was convinced that it was in vain to hide the truth. He testified quite openly in the Political Bureau that his activity and that of the other «influenced persons» was not a question of «influence», but a work of a secret agency carried out systematically, organized and directed from Belgrade or by Savo Zlatić, Josip Djerdja, Kuprešanin, Sergentić and others in Tirana.

In particular, his testimony that all the tales he had told us a few months before (about «the federal union», «the coming of the division», etc.) were not his own but came from the Yugoslavs, was very valuable for the further deepening of the analyses in the Political Bureau.

Amongst other things, Themelko testified: «Tito himself, in the presence of Tempo and Koča Popović, told me: 'Go and present this to Enver Hoxha as yours and persist till you convince him.'»

Like it or not, the others, too, especially Nesti Kerenxhi and Xhoxhi Blushi, began to talk, while Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo as the «deans» of the conspirators, continued (of course to their own disadvantage, because the Party had everything clear) to bluff and refuse to bring out everything.

Now, however, everything was ripe to raise the matter in the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party.

First, on September 6-7 the 10th Plenum of the CC of the CPA was held and there, after discussion, it was decided to call the 1st Congress of the CPA on November 1, 1948. We discussed and adopted the agenda for the Congress, the method of organization of party conferences in the districts, the method of election of delegates to the Congress, etc.

All these things had importance, not only because we were

going to such an historic event as the Congress of the Party for the first time, but also because, from the organizational aspect, the Yugoslavs had imposed anti-democratic forms and methods on us in the past.

Now these would come to an end once and for all and the very method of the organization, preparation and development of the Congress would constitute the re-establishment of the practice of all the internal norms and rules of the Party. After we had also discussed the draft of the new Constitution of the Party, I closed the 10th Plenum by pointing out to the comrades:

«Time does not wait. We must mobilize ourselves to put into practice the directives and orientations of this Plenum within a few days. We must immediately transmit the orientations to the committees of the Party in the regions, to guide and engage all the comrades in the work for the preparation of conferences and after this we shall meet again. We have a great and difficult task ahead of us: apart from the formulation and discussion of plans for the economic-cultural development, we shall analyse in detail the whole history of our relations with the Trotskyites of Belgrade and their anti-Marxist activity against us, as well as the way in which we have responded to this activity during the 6-7 years that we have been in contact with them.»

This analysis was carried out with complete success and adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles at the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, which was held from September 13-24, 1948.

In the report which I presented to the Plenum on behalf of the Political Bureau, I made a profound and detailed analysis of the whole history of our relations with the CPY and the Yugoslav state, of the political and organizational line of our Party especially since the Berat Plenum (November 1944), disclosed the causes of the mistakes observed amongst us and defined the measures for the change which was dictated by the new circumstances.

It would not be of value to dwell here on the ideas, facts

and conclusions presented in that report, because I would be repeating in one way or another all that I have written above. I want only to stress certain moments from the Plenum.

Above all, the sound Marxist-Leninist spirit which characterized the proceedings of the Plenum from beginning to end has remained indelible in my memory. For the first time after so many years (I can say since the 1st National Conference of the CPA in March 1943), the comrades got up and spoke freely, with maturity and great preoccupation about the acute problems which had been put forward for discussion. They spoke without partiality, without imposition and without hesitation before anyone and about everything. The solidarity of all the comrades with the report which I presented was expressed not simply in words, but with many arguments and facts which each of them brought from his own experience.

Both in the report and in the many contributions to the discussion (there were comrades who, by their own desire, spoke two or three times), the anti-Marxist activity of the Yugoslav leadership, its feverish efforts to lead us up a blind alley and to subjugate us, its ugly plot to gobble up Albania, were brought out even more clearly. Linking all these things with everything that was said in the letters of the Bolshevik Party and the Resolution of the Information Bureau, the Plenum rightly came to the conclusion that in the line of the leadership of the Yugoslav Party we had to do with an anti-Marxist line which was being concretized as a dangerous current within the international communist movement.

«It is the merit of the Bolshevik Party and the great Stalin, but also of our Party,» said one of the comrades, «that they discovered and forcefully opposed this dangerous line. If it had been left in peace and not attacked, it would have brought grave and painful consequences to the socialist camp.»

In the course of the debate, another comrade, although he attacked the Titoite deviation, expressed the opinion that

the betrayal by the Yugoslav leaders «will weaken the communist movement and the socialist camp, because we are left with one communist party and one socialist country less!»

Hysni Kapo took the floor and in his wise and concrete contribution, full of valuable arguments and generalizations, opposed the previous speaker:

«It is not true at all that the communist movement and the socialist camp will be weakened by the betrayal which the Yugoslav leaders are committing!» stressed Hysni among other things. «On the contrary, the exposure of the betrayal, the proper denunciation and condemnation which it has received will make us stronger, more compact and more determined to forge ahead. It is not the number of participating parties and countries that constitute the strength of the communist movement and the socialist camp, but the quality of these parties and countries, their determination to apply and defend Marxism-Leninism.»¹

A very large part of those 10-12 days of discussion and debate was occupied by analysis of the line pursued by our Party. Both the report and the discussion rightly stressed and proved that regardless of the interference, pressure and blackmail by the Titoites, the political line of the CPA had always remained correct and consistent. This line, it was said, had been attacked but had not wavered, had been threatened but had not been damaged.

«Certain individual distortions which have appeared,» the Plenum stressed, «are not the result of our line. They have been dictated to us and imposed by force and cunning in specific circumstances by the emissaries of the Yugoslav leadership. However, these occasional imposed distortions, as for example the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, can never represent or sully the correct political line pursued and defended by our Party. It is an important fact,» it was stressed, «that even the grave distortions of the 8th Plenum

¹ From the minutes of the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA. CAP.

never became established and implanted in our Party. We rejected them indignantly and now we are putting the seal on the condemnation they warranted.»

Matters were more difficult and more complicated in regard to the organizational line of the Party. Here, both the pressure and interference from outside and the scale of their penetration had been greater and on this account such violations had been permitted that the organizational line of the Party in general had been turned into an incorrect line. The 2nd and the 8th Plenums of the CC of the CPA had played a major negative role in this dangerous change. The analysis which was made of these two Plenums brought to light numerous new facts and arguments which proved not only the leading role which Tito's emissaries had played in the organization of them, but also the conspiratorial anti-party work of the secret agency headed by the organizational secretary, Koçi Xoxe with his henchmen.

Along with the incontestable facts and arguments which Comrades Gogo Nushi, Manush Myftiu, Haki Toska, Petro Papi and others brought up at the Plenum, a special role in throwing light on the plot at Berat and the 8th Plenum was played by those elements who had been implicated with the Yugoslavs, but still disguised themselves as if they were «remote from the secret agency» and «unsullied». Notable among these elements were Naxhije Dume, Nesti Kerenxhi, Pëllumb Dishnica, etc.

«Even before the Berat Plenum was held,» declared Naxhije Dume, «I knew what was being done, knew that the attack on and elimination of the Commander were being prepared, and also knew the new comrades who were to be put into the Bureau. Nako told me all these things.» Naxhije went on at length and the truth is that through her «zeal» she brought out facts which even much later were valuable for the exposure and unmasking of conspirators who still remained in the ranks of the Party. Amongst other things, Naxhije Dume was the first to reveal Nako's statement, «If the Commander is not convinced, the pistol will convince him.»

«Nako told me this. I was together with Pandi when he told me,» she testified.

Pandi Kristo who had collapsed like a heap of cow-dung in a rain storm finally «remembered» and testified:

«Nako said this. Koçi and I were there when he said it. Velimir Stojnić was present, too. They led me up a blind alley.»

The tangle was coming apart ever more clearly. In particular, the testimony of Pandi, which he made mostly from the fear which had gripped him as well as the generally frank and sound self-criticism of Kristo Themelko, brought about that even «General Xoxe» was «shaken». Now his threatening mien and any sign of megalomania had dropped away from him. He was like a plucked rooster.

«I have been more influenced by the Yugoslavs, because I put great trust in them. This is my undoing,» he stressed, when he was put with his back to the wall, and sat down.

The comrades produced new, ever more powerful arguments. He was compelled to make further admissions:

«I, for my part... have said that Albania cannot exist without Yugoslavia. I have said this, because this was fixed in my mind. I considered that Yugoslavia and Albania were in the camp headed by the Soviet Union, but Albania not shoulder to shoulder with, but under the wing of Yugoslavia. This was the influence of Tito's work. Then came the question of complete union, but how this union was to be brought about was not clear to me. I thought and repeated 'federation and confederation', but today it emerges clearly that they wanted Albania as a seventh republic.»

«But you, how did you want it personally?!» someone asked the «General» sarcastically.

His voice failed him.

«Eventually,» he said, «I told you I made a great mistake, but I could not see it existing independently. Under the wing of Yugoslavia, yes! Tito and Ranković influenced me greatly.»

Koçi Xoxe was even more disarmed when his «aides», Nesti Kerenxhi, a certain Vaskë Koleci (now we can say a

certain Vaskë, but at that time he was a big man, deputy minister of internal affairs who wanted to wreak havoc upon us) and others, in order to save their own skins, brought to light monstrous activities carried out behind the backs of the Party and its leadership. However, it must be said that at first they did not bring out these monstrosities themselves, on their own «initiative». No, they were compelled to «confess» when the truth about them came out clearly. As far as I remember, Comrade Adil Çarçani was speaking and with wisdom combined with indignation, was criticizing the anti-party «instructions» which came to the districts from the «organizational secretary of the Party» Koçi Xoxe. Amongst others Adil brought up this fact:

«When I was secretary in the regional committee of Shkodra, not only did we receive 'directives' which openly violated democracy in the Party, but once Zoi Themeli, sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, came to me and said, 'I have orders to control the party committee'. 'What do you mean control it?' I asked him. 'You are from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, what have you to do with the committee!' Zoi told me: 'This is the rule. Is it for nothing that the organizational secretary is also minister of Internal Affairs at the same time?' And he persisted, going on to say, 'This is a clear-cut order of the General himself and the Central Committee'.»

Right after this, Nesti Kerenxhi and Vaskë Koleci got up and admitted with their own mouths things which it had never crossed my mind could occur within our Party:

«Matters had gone so far,» they said, «that in order to admit or expel a comrade from the Party, permission had first to be received from the security organs; the party documents of all those expelled were kept in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In every basic organization of the Party there had to be a comrade of the security organs who should be elected to the bureau, indeed, should be secretary or vice secretary; likewise, in the party committees and in the bureaus of committees there had to be a 'representative' of the security organs,» and so on and so forth.

«How is it possible that these things have occurred without the knowledge of the Political Bureau, or at least without informing me, as General Secretary of the Party?» I asked Koçi Xoxe there and then.

«I had the idea that you knew about it,» he mumbled. «I did not think up these rules myself. The comrades... that is, the Yugoslav enemies, issued, them to us. That's how they act in their Party and I..., as I told the Plenum, was greatly influenced by them.»

At this point, Vaskë Koleci in order to emerge as «un-implicated» in the evil work, decided to deal his «General» a heavy blow:

«The Yugoslavs gave them to you, but you yourself wanted those things,» he said to Xoxe. «Last year you ordered us to work out 'the regulations on operations and control', which we sent to all branches of our ministry and it seems to me that those regulations outdid all.»

«What were those 'regulations'?» I asked him.

«The organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were set the task of keeping every communist and cadre throughout the country under surveillance and control!» replied Vaskë readily, convinced that with this «testimony» he had saved his skin.

«What's this you are telling us? And was it sent?!» I asked in shocked surprise.

«Not for surveillance!» Xoxi wanted to «soften» it somewhat. «We instructed the comrades of the security service to interest themselves in the lives of the comrades, their problems, their personal and family worries. This was the aim we had, not surveillance.»

A bitter laugh burst out in the hall.

«'Interest' in secrecy means surveillance!» Vaskë snarled at him. «Then, what did we do with the reports which came to us? Did we solve anyone's personal problems? No, we filled their personal files!»

It is of no value to dwell any further on the endless anti-party atrocities of Koçi Xoxe and company acting as a secret agency. The Plenum dealt with them for whole days

(the Political Bureau for some months before) and, moreover, after the 11th Plenum, when its conclusions and decisions were discussed in the Party and among the people, even more facts about the bitter truth came to light.

The important thing is that from all these analyses which were protracted and wearying, but principled and profound, all the anti-party and anti-Albanian activity of these rotten elements, who for years on end had been thrown into action to destroy the Party and the freedom and independence of the Homeland, was brought to light. The whole Party and people were convinced about the evil deed the conspirators had wanted to accomplish and this was the most important thing in our analyses. As for their punishment, this was now a simple matter.

Thus, these agents of the Yugoslavs were finished and eliminated from our ranks. The distortions which had resulted from their secret and open activity were finished, too.

The 11th Plenum decided to legalize the Party completely and immediately. It described the fact that the program of the Party had been hidden under the program of the Democratic Front as a grave mistake which had to be corrected immediately, condemned and annulled as anti-party and anti-Marxist most of the decisions of the Berat Plenum and all the decisions of the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, and suspended all sanctions and co-options which, as I said, had been made on an anti-democratic road, under pressure of the Yugoslav leadership and its secret agents, Koçi Xoxe and company.

The main one among those rehabilitated by the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA was Nako Spiru. The decision on his rehabilitation was taken because, as I explained above, the 11th Plenum rejected all the «accusations» the Yugoslav leadership had levelled on us such as that over the so-called «anti-Yugoslav line in the leadership of the CPA», or that which described Nako as «an agent of imperialism», on account of being ungrounded and made for anti-Albanian and anti-Marxist aims. With facts totally lacking, we had no reason to give credibility to this accusation which was made by

people who were themselves agents of imperialism. As for the «faults» of Nako in the economy, he, as I have explained, was not to blame for them, indeed, he was unjustly accused by the Yugoslavs as the author of a so-called autarkic five-year plan. We all were the authors of this plan, which in fact was bold, but not at all «unrealistic» or «autarkic». Likewise, in the decision regarding Nako Spiru's rehabilitation we were especially influenced by the fact that in the conditions existing at that time we did not know many of his stands, mistakes and secret actions, especially since the Berat Plenum. Above all, we did not know at that time that Nako had become a secret agent of the Yugoslav leadership and that, later, in his sordid gamble for power, especially in his rivalry with Koci Xoxe, when he saw himself abandoned by the Yugoslavs, had linked himself up (always as a secret agent) with the Soviets. These latter links we did not know, and we could not imagine that he was capable of such actions. We could only see that he defended the Soviet views, spoke well of the Soviet Union and, because of the very positive opinion which we ourselves had of the Soviet Union, we could appreciate these stands of Nako Spiru only positively. Similarly, the fact that he, especially in the years 1946 and 1947, drew closer to me and to the sound part of our leadership, had an influence on the decision we took. So, what we knew at that time, seen in its close connection with all the circumstances and conditions of that period, influenced the decision the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA took regarding Nako Spiru's rehabilitation.

The 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA also took all measures for the re-establishment of the internal democracy of the Party and, especially, for the preparation of the Constitution of the Party as quickly as possible, etc., etc.

A little after the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, the historic 1st Congress of our glorious Party was summoned in November 1948.

The political report, which I had prepared for the Congress in the course of all the endless and important work of that period and, especially in the conditions when we still had

Xoxe and his supporters in our way, demanded a great deal of time and effort. At that time we still had not organized the apparatus of the Party and the original of the report is in the archives of the CC just as I wrote it directly on my small-letter typewriter. As is known, it is a very voluminous report which took me about 15 hours to read to the Congress over two days divided into four sessions. However, I must say that the extremely tiring work, with many difficulties and «unknown quantities» in the preparation of it, gave me a special satisfaction and pleasure that have remained indelible in my memory.

Through this report, serious efforts were made for the first time at a scientific presentation, as correct and accurate as possible, of a whole historical period of our people, especially from the beginning of the 20's of this century onwards. I considered this extension «beyond the historical bounds» of the life of our Party (that is, before November 8, 1941) essential, proceeding from the basic premise of materialistic dialectics that nothing emerges in a vacuum, that every phenomenon, every event, has its own history, its own causes, roots and conditions, in the first place internal ones, of birth and development. This had occurred with our Communist Party, too. The analysis which I made of the period from the 20's to November 8, 1941 comprised, you might say, the prehistory of our Party and proved incontestably that the economic, social, political, historical and other conditions and forces in the Albania of this period were the decisive factors which led to the formation of the CPA, and not at all the factors about which the renegades of Belgrade were prattling, who quite openly and shamelessly attributed to themselves the role of the «founders» of our Party!

After this historical survey, the report analysed in detail all the activity of the Party from the time of its formation, correctly evaluated all the great victories achieved during and after the war, that is, in all those stages through which our Party and country had passed during those last seven years, discussed the circumstances and discovered the causes of the

mistakes which had appeared in the implementation of the line of the Party and defined the main tasks and orientations on the basis of which our glorious Party would lead the country.

The lofty party spirit that pervaded the report, which the Political Bureau of the Central Committee approved unanimously, orientated the delegates correctly in their contributions to the discussion.

Thus for 15 days on end, from November 8-22, the finest representatives of our Party, elected in the most democratic forms at the regional conferences of the Party, through their correct and courageous statements and opinions, made the 1st Congress of the Party one of the most outstanding historic events, not only of the Party, but of the whole history of our people.

Amongst other things, the analysis of our relations with the CPY and the Yugoslav state occupied an important place in the Congress. There, for the first time, we openly denounced and unmasked all the hostile activity of Tito and company. The facts, arguments and conclusions which the Congress presented on this problem were unshakeable and devastating for the renegades of Belgrade. It was proved even more clearly that all the mistakes and distortions observed, especially in the organizational line of our Party, had their main source in the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia. It had done everything in its power to impose alien, anti-Marxist views and practices on us, both because it was wrong theoretically (in essence its whole line was wrong and revisionist) and because it proceeded from aims that were purely conspiratorial, chauvinist and pragmatic towards our Party and country. Likewise, in the most democratic and just way, the Congress also decided the fate of Koci Xoxe and company. Despite the great exposure which we had made of them at the 11th Plenum and in the meetings of party activists in the regions and in the government departments and the preliminary measures which we had taken, we still allowed them to take part in and speak at the Congress. Of course, for the Central Committee and the Political Bureau everything in connection

with them was clear, but it was important that now the Congress of the Party itself should express to the end and put its seal on its opinions and judgments about them. While I was reading that part of the report which dealt with the conscious work of Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and others as secret agents, voices from the hall cried:

«Throw the enemies of the Party and people out of our ranks!»

This spirit pervaded the whole Party and the people who followed the Congress with great interest. Thousands of letters and telegrams came to us from the organizations of the Party and other organizations and institutions in the districts; thousands of working people, men, women, and youth, communists or not, were gathered in the streets outside when we entered or left the Congress hall. They shouted the one slogan: «Long live the Party! Down with the enemies!» One event which has remained deeply impressed in my memory was when we were met by the mothers of martyrs — the mothers of those who would have certainly been delegates to this Congress, — who encircled me and, headed by the courageous mother of Mihal Duri, with their clenched fists raised, instructed us, or I might even say, «demanded» of us, in the name of the blood which their sons had shed, that we stand firm, hold high the banner of the Party, defend the people's state power, and finished with the cry: «Down with the enemies!»

The many mature contributions of the delegates showed the agents of Belgrade in their true colours. Confronted with overwhelming facts and arguments, Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo tried to manoeuvre even in the Congress. Koçi Xoxe, for example, was obliged to admit with his own mouth that at Berat «I opposed the line of the Party and the General Secretary», that «our work there was done behind the back of the Party», etc., but Xoxe tried to justify himself by saying, «we did all these things because we did not understand we were making mistakes», «we did them unconsciously»,

«Stojnić led us up a blind alley»¹. Xoxe had «constructed» his whole «self-criticism» (or it had been prepared for him) in this spirit: he admitted that he had done a thousand and one evil things, but after every fact he stressed: «I did it unwittingly», «I did not know that I was acting against the Party and the people», «the Yugoslavs blinded me».

The delegates rejected and totally exposed this manoeuvre, too. With facts and arguments it was proved that everything had been done with full consciousness, according to a scenario prepared and approved in Belgrade.² At the Congress the delegates demanded insistently that Koçi Xoxe and company should answer for their anti-Albanian activity as secret agents, no longer to the Party, but to the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus, the 1st Congress of the Party further deepened and finally put the seal on the change which the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA had marked. The Party was equipped with a correct Marxist-Leninist general line. The Congress once again attacked as incorrect and harmful the former practice imposed by the Yugoslavs of keeping the Party in a semi-legal situation and once and for all consecrated the irreplaceable leading role of our Party in the whole life of our country. For the establishment of complete democracy in the Party and in the whole life of the country, for the assimilation and implementation of the Marxist-Leninist principles and norms which govern the internal life of the Party, the Con-

1 From Koçi Xoxe's «self-criticism» at the 1st Congress of the CPA, CAP.

2 The chiefs of Belgrade wanted to escape precisely this exposure. They did everything in their power to have Koçi Xoxe flee to Yugoslavia before the 1st Congress of the CPA. To this end they sent the Yugoslav representative in Tirana at that time a number of radiograms in one of which he was told to make contact with Koçi Xoxe without fail and bring about his fleeing to Yugoslavia. A reward of a hundred thousand leks was offered to the person who would accomplish this. (Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.)

stitution of the Party, which the Congress endorsed, was to play an important role.

When we discussed each paragraph of the Constitution in the Congress the comrades with concern and maturity made the comparison between many harmful practices and stands of the past and the Marxist truth that was expressed in the Constitution. Automatically our knowledge of the renegades of Belgrade and their agents in our ranks became more profound. The Congress affirmed once again the correct conclusion that in the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia we had to do not merely with an anti-Albanian, nationalist and chauvinist leadership, but above all with an agency of imperialism, with a clique of conscious renegades, who were struggling to revise the theory and practice of socialism and the revolution in all fields. The endless stream of facts which has never dried up, as well as our further analyses for the political and ideological unmasking of Yugoslav revisionism, have proved and are still proving how correct and far-sighted was the conclusion which the 1st Congress of the CPA arrived at about the renegades of Belgrade.

After the 1st Congress of the Party, in the light of the new facts which came out, the Party and the people rightly demanded that the chiefs of the plot should be handed over to the people's justice, to be judged for high treason to the Homeland, the Party and socialism.¹ Before the court, the agents of Belgrade through their own mouths testified that they had been trained and guided by Tito and his emissaries in everything they had done. We published their testimony in the press so that the people would read it, but also as a crushing blow to Tito over what he had done in the past and as a warning about the future.

1 The trial of Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and their three closest collaborators took place in the city of Tirana from May 11 to June 10, 1949. The court pronounced the sentence of death by shooting only for Koçi Xoxe. Pandi Kristo was sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment, whereas the others from 5 to 15 years of imprisonment.

Of course, as far as we were concerned, every kind of link with Tito and the Titoite party came to an end. The bitter past with them remained a valuable lesson for the future, because we knew we would never agree to have any direct or indirect first-hand contact with them, but the struggle against their anti-Marxist views and stands and against their uninterrupted anti-Albanian activity would never cease.

We would continue this struggle, too, adhering to Marxist-Leninist principle, to carry it consistently through to the end, through to victory.

X

IN OPEN STRUGGLE WITH THE TITOITES

The struggle against Titoism — an historical imperative ■ Our first clash with the Khrushchevites over the «Yugoslav question» ■ On the Tito-Ranković «democracy» ■ The Belgrade leadership throws into action the anti-Albanian scum, criminals and saboteurs ■ Khrushchevite betrayal assisting the Titoite betrayal. Smashing the Titoite-Khrushchevite plot at the Party Conference of Tirana (April 1956) ■ Mehmet Shehu — a multiple agent of the imperialist-revisionist secret services ■ Mehmet Shehu's juggling from the Berat Plenum (November 1944) to the 1st Congress of the CPA (November 1948) ■ The year 1960. Mehmet Shehu together with Tito, Randolph Churchill and Fultz on the transatlantic liner «Queen Elizabeth». Whom was this servant of many bosses to please and whom to displease? ■ In the 70's. The Western and the Titoite secret agencies order Mehmet Shehu into action. Three conspirators' groups foiled ■ Demonstrations in Kosova force the UDB to sacrifice the card on which they had «placed great hopes» in Albania. Why did Mehmet Shehu commit suicide? ■ The hope on terrorist bands ■ Socialist Albania has been and remains a granite rock.

The 35 years that have passed from the time when the Titoite betrayal was publicly denounced and unmasked are witness to the fact that although the links between our Party and the CPY were broken off once and for all in 1948, since then the struggle between us has never ceased and

has not been interrupted for one moment. Amongst other causes and factors there are two main ones which made this struggle vitally necessary for us:

First, our Party regards Titoism as one of the most dangerous variants of modern revisionism, and for this reason we consider and will consider our involvement in the struggle for its political and ideological exposure and defeat a right and duty of the first order.

Second, during this whole period the anti-Albanian activity of the Belgrade leadership has never ceased and for this reason our Party and state have had to wage a stern, tooth-and-nail struggle against it in order to uncover, attack and smash the aims and continuous conspiratorial activities of Belgrade.

Although there is no need to go into concrete details about how this struggle has been waged (it has been analysed in detail in all the theoretical documents of the Party), I want to point out some of its most important aspects and moments.

The struggle against Titoism — an historical imperative

Yugoslav revisionism, the first current which represented revisionism in power, emerged at a key moment in the struggle between socialism and imperialism. Right from the outset, American imperialism and the whole of world reaction saw in Titoism the course, the ideology and the policy which led to the degeneration of the communist parties of socialist countries, to the splitting and destruction of the unity of the international communist movement and to sabotage of the revolution and national liberation wars. For this reason imperialism and reaction supported the renegades of Belgrade with all their might and means, kept them alive and gave

them the directive that, while maintaining certain «socialist» appearances, they should serve as a means of diversion for the destruction of others.

Tito and company accepted this mission in full consciousness and turned the Yugoslav party and state into an agency of imperialism. Faced with this evil, our communist parties could not and should never remain indifferent. In particular, it was urgently necessary that the parties of the then socialist countries should not rest on their laurels and think foolishly, that, since they were in power and since the Yugoslav leadership had been denounced and remained isolated, it no longer presented any danger. No, the relentless class struggle, the struggle for the application and defence of the purity of Marxism-Leninism, for the tempering of every communist and the entire Party with the revolutionary ideology, was a necessity *sine qua non* for every party in order to prevent what had happened in Yugoslavia from being repeated anywhere else.

Conscious of all these things, in 1948 our Party (although relatively young and without the necessary experience in the field of theory) was among the first to array itself in the open political and ideological struggle against Yugoslav revisionism. Along with other communist parties, members or non-members of the Information Bureau, our Party made its contribution to the uncovering and further unmasking of this revisionist current, of the social class roots and causes which made its birth possible and of the damage which it brought, both to the party, state and people of Yugoslavia and to the international communist and workers' movement.

For their part, Tito and company, enraged by the defeat which they had suffered and by the exposure which was continually bringing them out in their true colours, launched, together with the struggle for the dissemination of the revisionist theories, an unscrupulous campaign of slanders and accusations against the CP of the Soviet Union and J.V. Stalin, against the Information Bureau and also against our Party. Driven with their backs to the wall by the courageous

and well-proved words of our Party, they could only scream that the Party of Labour of Albania had allegedly broken with them and was attacking them, since it preferred to subjugate itself to a bigger party (!), the CPSU, and that allegedly we were acting as Moscow and the Cominform «told» us and «dictated» to us!

Aware that we could expect nothing else from the traitors in Belgrade, we paid no heed to this filthy accusation. Hence we continued our work and, understandably, we considered it our great good fortune that in this fierce clash between Marxism-Leninism and modern revisionism we stood shoulder to shoulder with the CPSU, led by the glorious Stalin, and with the other communist parties of the then socialist countries and the capitalist countries.

The general solidarity in the struggle against the renegades of Belgrade (at that period, in appearance at least, this solidarity seemed complete) gave us heart and courage, and in the course of this struggle we prepared ourselves better and tempered ourselves further for the future battles.

But only a few years later our Party was to be faced with a real test in regard to the accusation trumpeted so loudly by the chiefs in Belgrade about the motives from which we proceeded in the struggle against them. This was a grave and bitter test which we, for our part, had not and never would have wanted. The fact is, however, that we were faced with it: after the death of J.V. Stalin, the Khrushchevite team, which seized power, initially toned down and very soon completely extinguished its struggle against Yugoslav revisionism. According to the logic of the Titoite accusation, we, too, should automatically have changed our tune, since «this is what Moscow did». But to the astonishment of Tito (and of course of Khrushchev, too) we continued our former course: no concessions to, no sign of conciliation with, the Yugoslav revisionists.

We acted in this way because we were more than convinced about the betrayal of the Yugoslav leadership, because we saw that it was completely committed to the course of

revising the whole theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, in the period from 1948 to 1954, Tito, Kardelj and others had proclaimed and were consistently applying theories and forms of organization in the Yugoslav party and state which quite openly testified to their complete abandonment and distortion of the principles of Marxism-Leninism (to this period belong such «acts» of the Titoites as changing the name of the party from «Communist Party» to «League of Communists»; the transformation of this «League» into a kind of educational-propaganda Association; their adoption of «American democracy» as the model for the structure of the political system in Yugoslavia; the proclamation of the so-called self-administrative socialism which is nothing but a disguise for the capitalist order; their preaching of the withering away of the state in socialism, their denial of the Marxist-Leninist thesis about the need of the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat during the whole period of transition from capitalism to communism, etc., etc).

Precisely at the time that these things were occurring, that is, when with his actions Tito was openly proclaiming that he was a dyed-in-the-wool renegade and revisionist, Khrushchev strove to «make clear to us» that Tito was allegedly a «Marxist», indeed «an outstanding Marxist», that «socialism» was being built in Yugoslavia, and that the blame for what had occurred in 1948, should not be laid on Tito and company, but on the Cominform and Stalin!

We did not agree with such a view and assessment of things and, therefore, we acted not in the way that Moscow «transmitted», but as Marxism-Leninism taught us.

In his evil work in regard to the stand towards the Belgrade clique, as in every other field, however, Khrushchev did not concentrate solely on setting a «personal example». Soon the moment came when, through categorical orders and dictate, Moscow demanded that we should cease our principled struggle and bend the knee to and kiss Tito. We indignantly rejected these orders and dictates, and refused to act against the truth in any instance. Indeed, as I have

explained in detail in my book of memoirs «The Khrushchevites», for us the stand towards the renegades of Belgrade became one of the touchstones to see what were the new leaders who took power in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, and what were the leaders of other parties who changed course immediately after the emergence of Khrushchevite revisionism.¹ Events developed swiftly and the two sides, the Khrushchevites and the Titoites, in collaboration and unity, concocted plans and began their activity to alter the situation in the international communist and workers' movement, and especially in the countries of people's democracy, in favour of the revisionist aims of Khrushchev and the agent of imperialism, Tito. Regrettably, this feverish anti-Marxist activity yielded its bitter fruits in the parties of other countries. It was proved that not we, but the other parties, had climbed on the band-wagon when they, too, «launched» the attack against Tito and company in 1948, along with the Bolshevik Communist Party. That same Dej who at one time had boasted of his «valiant deeds» with a pistol in his belt against a king fallen from power, that same Dej who delivered reports in the Cominform on the unmasking of the Yugoslav revisionist leadership, was one of the first to rush to Tito to beg his forgiveness. The same thing was done by the Poles, who amongst other things, took the old Titoite, the notorious Wladyslaw Gomulka out of prison and placed him directly in the post of General Secretary of the UWP of Poland in order to set Poland as quickly as possible on the tragic course of complete chaos; the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, of course, and all the others in turn did the same thing. Thus, the conclusion of our Party was very quickly confirmed that, if revisionism is not combated relentlessly and with full force, the Yugoslav phenomenon would occur with the others, just as it did.

However, I am speaking about our course. We con-

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, p. 101, Eng. ed.

tinued the struggle against the renegades in Belgrade; mercilessly attacked their hostile views and stands on every occasion, publicly exposed them and never hesitated, from fear of anyone. Meanwhile, we were subjected to the unrelenting pressures and machinations of Tito and Khrushchev. Just as they had done in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, etc., they tried to rehabilitate their group of agents, Koçi Xoxe and company in Albania, too. Both the Yugoslav leadership and the Soviet leadership (officially through Suslov) demanded the rehabilitation of Koçi Xoxe, that is, that we should return to the Berat Plenum of the CC of the CPA, admit the so-called «mistakes» of our Party in line and in our relations with the Yugoslavs, a demand which, as I pointed out earlier, cannot be claimed to have been made in 1944 without the knowledge of the chief of the Soviet mission in Albania Major Ivanov, the close friend of the notorious Colonel Velimir Stojnić. However, all these efforts failed. Our Party of Labour remained unshaken in its earlier view that the Titoite group had been and still was a group of traitors, renegades, Trotskyites, subversionists and a secret agency of the Americans, and that neither our Party, the Cominform, nor Stalin had been wrong about them. We repeated this view to Khrushchev and his lackeys many times: through letters and in official meetings we presented endless arguments from the «theoretical» works and practical deeds of the Yugoslav renegades, but the truth fell on deaf ears. Thus, we were convinced that the revisionist gangrene had spread through the head and body of the CC of the CPSU and the leaderships of other parties. Even though we saw we were alone in this struggle, still we did not retreat.

Once the phase of the «touchstone» was over, that is, once we were convinced where Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites stood in regard to the Titoites, we decided to take another major step in the struggle against modern revisionism. The fact is that over a period of several years, especially from the beginning of 1956 to the middle of 1960, we used the «open door» of the struggle against the Titoite traitors to

attack the new betrayal which had emerged in the arena and was growing stronger from day to day, the Khrushchevite betrayal.

As I have had occasion to stress at other times, this was a clever and far-sighted tactic of our Party which we employed with great success. Anyone who carefully examines all the documents of our Party during this period will understand that as early as 1954, 1955, and especially after 1955, we were engaged in struggle against the Khrushchevite betrayal which was developing at top speed alongside the Titoite betrayal, and not just in 1960 and 1961 when we came out openly and publicly against the Khrushchevites. However, since the conditions had not matured and the moment had not arrived to come out openly and publicly against Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites by name, at that period, we attacked and exposed their revisionist views and stands by linking them in the press and in public with the revisionists of Belgrade and the anti-Marxist activity of Tito, Kardelj, etc. This does not mean that we were attacking Tito and his henchmen over something for which they were not responsible. Tito was as much a Khrushchevite as Khrushchev, just as Khrushchev was as much a Titoite as Tito. The two variants were branches of the one trunk' — modern revisionism, they were both dangerous, hostile currents and deserved exposure and the powerful attack. As I said, however, besides getting what he deserved, Tito was used by us also in the role of «the Turk's head», or more precisely, Khrushchev's head.

The two sides saw where our attack was aimed, so they further strengthened their collaboration and what Khrushchev could not say against us for tactical reasons and because of public opinion Tito proclaimed very well. Amongst others, Tito's notorious speech at Pula in November 1956 is well known. There Tito not only made an unrestrained anti-Marxist attack on the theory and practice of the socialist order, but also directly condemned «the cult of Enver Hoxha» and called for the overthrow of the leadership of our Party.

Undoubtedly, with this anti-Albanian attack and the open call for the overthrow of our leadership Tito expressed not only his own desire, but also the desire of the Soviet leadership. It is not accidental that just a few days before this notorious speech, Krylov, the Soviet ambassador in Tirana, came to me and demanded insistently, on the instructions of the Soviet leadership, that we «do not reply harshly to Tito, because tempers will become heated and our work will be ruined». We gave Khrushchev and Tito our answer immediately: we denounced and condemned Tito's ultra-revisionist speech with all our batteries, unconcerned whether Tito «would lose his temper» or Khrushchev's «work would be ruined». In fact our clear-cut principled stands were ruining Khrushchev's work. When the Soviet revisionists saw that they had failed in Hungary and elsewhere and that the situation in the communist movement and the socialist camp was slipping from their control, they retreated a little from their subversive struggle and collaboration with Tito, because through his actions and «theories» he was not only exposing the revisionist mire in which they were wallowing, but was also trying to take the Khrushchevite current under his wing and to manoeuvre it in accord with his own interests and those of his imperialist patrons. At those moments Khrushchev was temporarily obliged to support the stands of the Party of Labour of Albania, published our articles in the Soviet press, was obliged to accept our resolute stand against Titoism as an agency of imperialism in the 1957 Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties, and this was included in the Declaration of the Meeting, etc. But, as I have said at other times, this was only a temporary retreat by Khrushchev. In essence he was opposed to the principled struggle which we waged against Titoism to the extent that, in one of the confrontations which I had with him and Suslov over the stand towards Yugoslav revisionism, Khrushchev was so irritated that he said to me angrily: «Where do you want to lead us, to Stalin's road?!»

Step by step, our principled contradictions with the Soviet leadership were building up, heading for the confrontation at Bucharest.

As is known, in 1960 we came out openly against the Khrushchevite betrayal, too, and after this we intensified our principled struggle against it, just as we had done against the Titoite current from 1948 onwards. At this period it seemed as though the CP of China was engaged shoulder to shoulder with us in this struggle against both of these currents of modern revisionism. In this period, too, there were people who said that we had entered into this struggle because this is what Beijing was doing (!), this was dictated to us by Mao Zedong, and this time these voices came not only from Belgrade, but also from Moscow! Such base accusations merely made us smile and we went on with our work. We were already well aware that such things were not said because the accusers did not know the Party of Labour of Albania well. No, these were the howls of a wolf which, even when mortally wounded, tries to threaten and frighten its prey. The Titoite and Khrushchevite revisionists were trying to obscure the truth with smoke and fog, to inflict what damage they could on the image of our Party.

Time was soon to prove once again that we had committed ourselves to the struggle against revisionism proceeding, not from the dictate of Beijing or Mao Zedong, but as always, from the supreme dictate of Marxism-Leninism. On the orders and in favour of our guiding ideology, that is, in defence of the theory and practice of the revolution from the attacks which the modern revisionists were making on it, our heroic Party had waged, was waging and would continue to wage its own principled struggle. The day came when Mao Zedong ceased the struggle against Yugoslav revisionism, but we continued it as before. It must be said that this time, too, through the «open door» of the struggle against Yugoslav and Soviet revisionism we had the opportunity to attack the views and distortions which the Communist Party of China

and its deranged leader Mao Zedong were making of Marxism-Leninism. However, as I have proved at length in a series of materials, especially in «Reflections on China», the cause of the betrayal of the CP of China does not lie either in Mao's dotage in his old age or the senility of other old men in Beijing. No, they had been revisionists, indeed pure revisionists, since their youth, but had adopted their allegedly principled, Marxist-Leninist phrases at particular periods (especially so in 1960) in order to conceal behind them long-range, counter-revolutionary, anti-Marxist aims and plans. When finally they were convinced that their «Marxist» manoeuvres were not leading them where they intended, they threw off the mantle of «Marxist-Leninists» and emerged as they were in reality — inveterate Titoites, Eurocommunists and Khrushchevites. Events developed rapidly and when the leadership of Beijing fell on its knees before the renegade of Belgrade we not only did not do as Mao and Zhou Enlai did and as they dictated to us, but on the contrary we did not hesitate to rise immediately to attack this other variant of modern revisionism — the Chinese variant, Mao Zedong thought!

These and other arguments prove completely that in the struggle against the renegades of Belgrade, just as against all other revisionist currents, we did not proceed from any external factor, that we never acted blindly or following the band-wagon, and that we were not influenced by anyone. So, convinced from the outset that we were waging a just struggle, conscious that we were performing our duty as a Marxist-Leninist party, we pressed on with this struggle, turning this whole process not only into one of the most glorious chapters in the history of our Party, but also into a great school of revolutionary training and tempering, into an unprecedented university for thorough knowledge and assimilation of Marxism-Leninism.

There was one moment when Khrushchev, unable to shut our mouths in the open and principled struggle we were wag-

ing against Yugoslav revisionism, made the accusation that we were acting in this way, because allegedly we wanted to appear as «the standard-bearers» of the struggle against modern revisionism, that is, allegedly to emerge as better than the others. In essence, this dirty accusation also clearly expressed the whole burden of hostile megalomaniacal, anti-Marxist, views of the accuser himself. It had never been our intention and we had not involved ourselves in this struggle in order to «show off», to emerge as better than the others, or to put the others under command or dictate. No, with the struggle against Yugoslav revisionism we were simply doing our duty, a duty which was equally incumbent on any genuine Marxist-Leninist party. And when the others abandoned this sacred duty, were we supposed to abandon it, too, and keep silent to avoid giving the «opportunity» to others to accuse us of wanting to be the «standard-bearers» and of megalomania?! Had our Party acted in that way this would have been an unpardonable sin. At no time did we fall into that abyss into which the Khrushchevites and, later, the Maoists wanted to push us. Thus, we continued the struggle against Titoism from no motive other than to perform one of the fundamental tasks which faced and faces every party.

Here, however, there is an indisputable truth which must be brought out unhesitatingly: in regard to the things that have occurred in the international communist and workers' movement in the last three or four decades (especially after the Khrushchevite betrayal) the great historic merit belongs to the Party of Labour of Albania that of all the parties in power it is the only one which not only was not deceived and never at any moment ceased the struggle against Yugoslav revisionism, but also made a profound and all-round analysis of Titoism or, more accurately, carried out a thorough autopsy on it.

Proud of the contribution which we have made to the exposure of this variant of revisionism, and convinced and conscious of the necessity for intensifying the struggle against

it, we shall continue on this course in the future, too, shoulder to shoulder with the other Marxist-Leninist parties. We have not reconciled ourselves and never will reconcile ourselves to Titoism and all the other variants of modern revisionism. Our only «contact» with them is through the political and ideological struggle which we will continue until they are completely and finally routed and destroyed.

The plots continue

Already in May-June 1948 we were more than aware that Tito and the Titoites, as traitors to Marxism-Leninism, were and would remain inimical and dangerous to all the communist parties, to the revolutionary movements and national liberation struggles everywhere in the world, but for us, the Albanian communists and people, besides this, they were and would remain direct, savage, sworn anti-Albanian enemies. We were convinced that they would never give up their plans and aims to gobble up Albania, and to this end would not lay down their arms of subversion, interference and plots against our Party and country.

We would be vigilant and with our fist clenched at every moment, because, although it had suffered heavy blows, the Titoite agency in Albania would not cease working for the future and for long-term plans and variants. In this context, in a thousand and one ways, Tito and company would do everything in their power to regain their lost positions, to create conditions and the terrain in order to penetrate amongst us and destroy us. They could never reconcile themselves to the fact that Albania had «escaped» from their hands, could never sleep easily when they saw that a party, which they had wanted to turn into a blind tool, but which to their regret had constantly attacked them and their old pan-Slav dreams and in the end had smashed them, was working and leading in Albania. Hence, as long as

they remained in power, the Titoites would be real and dangerous enemies of our Party and country.

It did not take months or years for the Titoites themselves to prove the truth of this. On the contrary, when we still had not denounced them publicly, in order to «forestall the evil» they launched a whole campaign of slanders and accusations against our Party and its leadership, and immediately after the 1st Congress of our Party, Belgrade's anti-Albanian campaign assumed unprecedented proportions and intensity. The newspapers, radio stations, pamphlets and publishing houses, all the means of Titoite propaganda were activated in this dirty campaign, pouring out monstrosities against us. Amongst other things, at that time they accused us of being «violators of democracy» in the party and among the people (!), of killing «communists» and «honest patriots» (!), and later went on to the accusation that we were turning Albania into a «barracks surrounded by barbed wire» where everything was trampled under the «military jackboot», etc., etc.

According to this alarm for propaganda which thundered from Belgrade one would have thought that havoc was being wrought in Albania, but when it came to providing facts and arguments «the defenders of democracy» in Belgrade found themselves in a deplorable position: they were able to mention only one name, that of Koçi Xoxe!

But who were these «ideal defenders» of «pure democracy» who, simply because our organs of the dictatorship had condemned to death only one sworn enemy and agent, Koçi Xoxe, arrived at the «horrificed» conclusion that we were «murderers» and «violators of democracy»?!

Here I shall not mention the mass murders, eliminations and exterminations which the Titoite army and the organs of the UDB perpetrated during the period 1945-1948 on the orders of Tito-Ranković and company, under the pretext of the struggle to «clean up ustaše and četnici elements», «criminal bands», «remnants of the old regime», etc., nor shall I mention the black terror which they unleashed at this period (especially from the end of 1944 right through 1945)

upon the people of Kosova and the Albanian population living on their own territories in Montenegro and Macedonia, under the pretext of the struggle against «Ballist gangs», «nationalists», «great Albanians», etc. For comparison, however, I shall dwell a little on how «the Titoite democracy» acted and how our democracy acted in 1948 towards the respective opponents and enemies.

As I related in detail above, the whole picture of the treacherous work of the gang of Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and others as agents in the service of the Yugoslavs became more than clear to us especially in the early months of 1948. However, although they were not accused simply of having alien views, but especially of high treason towards the Party and the country, we allowed Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo and company to take part in all the meetings of the Political Bureau, in the 9th, 10th and 11th Plenums of the CC of the Party, in the meetings of party activists which were held later and even in the 1st Congress of the CPA. Not only did we allow them to take part, but we also gave them the right to speak as often as they considered necessary.

What special type of «democracy» did Tito and Ranković in Yugoslavia offer all those thousands of elements of the CPY who expressed solidarity with the letters of the CC of the CPSU and the Resolution of the Cominform?! They were clapped in handcuffs as soon as they began to open their mouths! And when hundreds of others simply demanded that what was written in the letters of the CC of the CPSU should be discussed in the party, that is, when they had not yet expressed themselves either for or against, the Titoite «democracy» arrested them, threw them into prison and killed them in secret. So, while we analysed the criminal work of the Koçi Xoxe gang for five to six months on end in the Party (where the traitors themselves were present), the Titoites did not allow their opponents to speak even in a single meeting of the organization of which they were members! Out of the whole network of anti-state agents that we discovered we handed over to the court only 4-5 persons, while the Tito

clique filled the prisons with thousands and thousands of people who were simply ideological opponents! And after all this Tito and company had the temerity to accuse us of being «violators of democracy»!

Of the four or five elements whom we handed over to the courts for punishment at the end of 1948, in fact, only one, Koçi Xoxe, was sentenced to death as a sworn traitor to the Party and state, as chief of the gang which had done everything in its power to put Albania in thrall to Yugoslavia! The 3 or 4 others were sentenced to 5-20 years imprisonment according to the degree of their culpability and the stand they adopted when they were caught red handed in the plot. In Yugoslavia, however, the Titoites killed the bulk of those thousands of Yugoslav communists who were thrown into prison as supporters of the Cominform or they simply disappeared leaving to trace. Nevertheless, they had the temerity to accuse us of being «murderers»!

The notorious concentration camps like Goli Otok, a kind of Mathausen in the conditions of «Yugoslav socialism», were set up not in Albania, but in Yugoslavia. It was not our communists and patriots who were incarcerated, maimed, and wiped out in them, but Yugoslavs, including hundreds of thousands of Albanians from Kosova and others who lived on their own lands in Montenegro and Macedonia. That is, we did not fill Albania with Goli Otoks, but the Belgrade leadership filled Yugoslavia with such notorious camps. And they had the temerity to accuse us of turning Albania into «a barracks dominated by the military jackboot»!

That, then, is what the «Titoite democracy» was, that is what the «advocates of Christian charity», Tito and Ranković, were, who perpetrated the most monstrous crimes against the party and peoples of Yugoslavia without a tremor, while they were «horrified», because we had condemned to death one sworn enemy of ours and their obedient agent! It is the same «Ranković democracy» which has been wreaking havoc in Yugoslavia for 35 years on end, the same «Titoite democracy» which recently unleashed the black

hundreds and thousands of Rankoviés, Lubiciés, Stamboliés, and Herleviés against the peaceful demonstrations of the people of Kosova demanding respect for and implementation of their constitutional rights.

However, since 1948 Tito, as the rabid anti Albanian he was, could not and did not content himself simply with propaganda attacks against us.

Just like the reactionary governments of Western countries, the Titoite leadership set up on Yugoslav territory whole camps in which criminals and other agents, enemies of the new socialist order in Albania, were assembled, trained and prepared to infiltrate into our territory for sabotage and subversion. Thus, the time came when instead of the earlier «party» and state emissaries, Tito and his henchmen began to send us dozens of bandits, criminals, thieves and other reprobates who had fled from Albania together with the occupiers in 1944 or afterwards, on account of the crimes they had committed and the hostility they nurtured towards the new order of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In collaboration with the foreign imperialist and chauvinist agencies, especially those of the neighbouring countries, the renegades of Belgrade collected up the anti-Albanian scum of agents, political and ordinary criminals and fugitives wherever they were and brought them to Yugoslavia to prepare them as mercenary forces against the Party of Labour of Albania and the Albanian socialist state. Naturally, we were to receive these «bandit «guests» from Yugoslavia as bandits and criminals are received — with the trap set.

These sinister forces constituted, you might say, the «external echelon» which the Yugoslav leadership was to throw in against us, as it did. At the same time, the Yugoslavs did not overlook the «internal echelon», either. In this were included not only those elements long recruited by the UDB, whom we had still not discovered, but all the remnants of the old order which we had overthrown. All these elements were predisposed to prick up their ears and accept the orientations and signals which came from Belgrade. This is under-

standable: the overthrown classes, the traitors, the discontented elements, enemies of the people's state power, all those who could not endure the justice of the Party and our people's state power, had pinned all their hopes on external support. And if up till 1948 they had pinned their hopes on the Americans and the British, now it was no trouble to add another ally and new patron. They were bound to try, just as they did, to activize themselves, to enter into contact with and operate in the Titoite's network, too.

In time, however, they, too, were uncovered and attacked. The hopes of Tito and company about arousing discontent, panic, despair, confusion and disorder in Albania were not justifying themselves. One after the other, all the gangsters and wreckers and the secret agents who were thrown into action in our country during this period fell into our hands, like rats in a trap.¹

Still we did not go to sleep. Time was to show that the Yugoslav leadership, either with «its own forces» or in secret agreement with the imperialist secret agencies, kept other «pawns in reserve» to bring into action at the moments which appeared most opportune and when their interests required. As to who these «pawns in reserve» were, this would be brought to light by the progress of our revolution. The main thing is that we remained permanently vigilant, aware that we would not be left to pursue our course in peace, because, apart from anything else, our many enemies would never allow us to work and live in peace.

In this way the initial phase of Tito's efforts to change the situation in Albania through wreckers and secret agents came to an end. Nothing shook our socialist fortress, its foundations were unshakeable. Step by step, along with the advance in

1 From 1948 to 1955 the Yugoslav secret agency infiltrated into and organized in Albania 307 gangs of secret agents, wreckers and criminals who were all captured or wiped out. During the same period groups and secret organizations of agents set up and guided by the Yugoslav secret service in collaboration with Western secret services were discovered and wiped out in our country.

all fields of life, along with the cleaning out of imperialist, Titoite and imperialist-Titoite gangs and networks of secret agents, we became stronger and more determined on our course.

About the beginning of the 50's it was seen clearly that Tito could achieve nothing against us through the methods of wreckers, secret agents and the old anti-Albanian and anti-socialist scum. However, precisely when his hopes of overturning the situation in Albania were fading, another renegade, Nikita Khrushchev, came to the aid of Tito, like a «gift from God».

The Khrushchevite betrayal, one of the greatest traumas the international communist and workers' movement has ever suffered, gave Tito new possibilities and means and, together with them, great hopes of changing the situation in Albania. Now his old chauvinist greed to gobble up Albania was to be combined with two other fundamental factors: with the hatred of the renegades of Belgrade for socialism which was being built in Albania, and second, with the desire to avenge themselves for the repeated blows and exposures which our Party and people had been inflicting on them for years on end.

The Titoites did not wait long before they launched their first attack on us through Tuk Jakova. It was by no means an accident that precisely when Tito and Khrushchev were putting their fiddles in tune, a month or two before Khrushchev went to Belgrade to kiss Tito, Tuk Jakova got up and repeated the hostile thesis of the Yugoslavs that allegedly they had created the Communist Party of Albania (!) and that the «merit» for all the victories achieved during the Anti-fascist National Liberation War belonged to them(!).

I have already dealt in detail with what this «thesis» is and why it was raised. Here I want to point out something else: Tuk Jakova was one of the participants in the Founding Meeting of the CPA in November 1941 and, during the years of the war up till 1955, like all of us, he, too, had heard this thesis many times and had not accepted it, but on the contrary had opposed it strongly. Then, how did it come about that he changed his mind and spat in his own face in April

1955?! Undoubtedly, Çalamani (Dušan Mugoša) who, according to the code-word of the UDB, «remembered and did not forget» his recruits, signalled Tuk to go into action. Tuk's other «theses» were all those which the Khrushchevite team were peddling wholesale in their preparation of the terrain for the 20th Congress of the CPSU: the dying out of the class struggle, re-examination of the line pursued by the Party, especially the rehabilitation of those enemies who had been condemned for opportunism and Trotskyism; the changing of the composition of the CC of the party and the bringing of condemned elements into the leadership, etc., etc.

Our Party immediately dealt powerful, merciless blows at the «theses» and aims of Tuk and those who had dished them up to him. Only one person, Bedri Spahiu, long known as an opportunist, a megalomaniac, and a partisan of the thesis of the dying out of the class struggle, etc., associated himself with Tuk Jakova. In condemning these two capitulationist and anti-party elements, the Plenum of the CC of the PLA held in June 1955, not only expressed the determination of the PLA not to fall into that mire in which the other parties of the then socialist countries had begun to sink, but, at the same time, gave Tito and company a good lesson. The Titoites' first attempt against us in the period when the Khrushchevite epidemic had broken out was foiled. Despite this bitter outcome, however, the Yugoslav leadership did not lose hope and did not spare its efforts to make new attempts at interference and subversion in Albania.

These were precisely the moments when the sensational and disgraceful reconciliation of Tito and Khrushchev was being brought to fruition in Belgrade at the end of May and the beginning of June 1955. Our clear-cut opposition to this notorious action is well known.

As soon as Khrushchev informed us at the last minute that he was going to Belgrade in person to make peace with Tito, to beg his «pardon» for «the mistakes committed against him» in 1948-and in 1949 (!) and to publish in the press the «decision» (which Khrushchev himself had taken) about annull-

ing the resolutions of the Cominform, we wrote a strong letter to Khrushchev in which we expressed our disapproval of these actions and especially of his annulling the resolutions of the Cominform.¹ In several meetings which I had those days with the Soviet ambassador in Tirana Levichkin, I presented the Soviet leadership with a wide range of powerful arguments in support of our correct stand on this question. However, the Tito-Khrushchev accord came about. A few days after this act of treachery, on June 17, 1955, with the measures which our Plenum of the Central Committee took against Tuk Jakova and Bedri Spahiu, we gave Tito and Khrushchev direct and indirect warning that we would not reconcile ourselves to their plans, but on the contrary would mercilessly attack any attempt of theirs or their agents to subjugate us. However, it must be said that, although we never on any occasion accepted the line which Moscow dictated to us, but on the contrary opposed it, we could not remain «unaffected», as you might say, outside the waves which it stirred up. Both Khrushchev and Tito were to work, sometimes in unity, sometimes separately, in order to give it the maximum striking force, that is, to create a situation which would lead towards the «submission» of Albania.

Among the more serious events during this process, the Party Conference of Tirana in April 1956 must be mentioned.

1 «The daily experience of our Party in relation to the Yugoslavs,» we wrote to Khrushchev among other things, «both before the breach with the Yugoslavs in 1948 and later, to this day, proves clearly and completely, with many incontestable facts, that the principled content of all the resolutions of the Cominform in regard to the Yugoslav question has been completely correct... In our opinion such a hasty (and ill-considered) decision on an issue of great importance and of principle, without first making a profound analysis together with all the parties interested in this issue, and what is more, the publication of it in the press and proclamation of it in the talks in Belgrade, would not only be premature, but would also cause serious harm in the general orientation... We are convinced that this general line of our Party in its relations with Yugoslavia is correct...» (From the letter of the CC of the PLA to the CC of the CPSU, May 25, 1955, CAP.)

In the context of the first phase of the open emergence of Khrushchevite revisionism it undoubtedly constitutes the main attempt of Tito and Khrushchev to overturn the situation in Albania. Held very shortly after the ill-famed 20th Congress of the CPSU, the Tirana Conference of April 1956, from the ideological stand-point, was a reflection of that congress and the revisionist platform which it codified, while from the organizational stand-point it was simply a plot hatched up by the Titoite leadership through the Yugoslav embassy and, as it turned out later, in collaboration with the Soviet embassy, too.

It is a recognized fact that especially after the 20th Congress of February 1956, Khrushchev, in collusion with Tito, did everything in his power to overturn the situation in all the countries of people's democracy. As I wrote above, one of the first measures which Khrushchev took was the rehabilitation of those condemned in the time of the Cominform, bringing them into the leaderships of the parties and countries of people's democracy. Rajk in Hungary, Gomułka in Poland and Kostov in Bulgaria were all rehabilitated one after the other, the so-called «movement for democratization», for «the re-examination of decisions taken under the influence of Stalin and the Cominform,» etc., was launched. In many countries the «new line» of reconciliation with the former enemies, «peaceful coexistence» with imperialism, etc., were made law. None of the other erstwhile people's democracies of Europe, nor Mao Zedong's China, lagged behind in this headlong gallop.

Tito watched this process with satisfaction and did everything possible to give it new impulses and develop it in his own interest. Hoping that the time had come for him to take up the banner, he declared more than once that the «blame» for all that had occurred lay in the socialist order itself and, consequently, the «dogmatic», «Stalinist» socialism must be overturned and the Yugoslav order of «vital», «human self-administration» must be established.

Many were deceived by or enthusiastically welcomed all

this betrayal which was now codified and became an official ideology. Only our Party and country remained unshaken on the former line. This could not fail to infuriate the preachers of modern revisionism, Tito and Khrushchev. When they saw that what was happening in the other countries was not happening here, they decided to pursue their old course — that of plots. In this direction Tito was a master.

The Tirana Conference was precisely a part of the Tito-Khrushchev plot to overturn the situation in our country. I say a part, because their plan, or their plot, was much more wide-ranging and of much greater proportions. At the Tirana Conference only the first step was to be taken, the feeling of the pulse, the preparation of the terrain, and later it would be carried further, especially at the 3rd Congress of the PLA which was to be held and did take place a little after the Tirana Conference.¹

In fact, what occurred at the Tirana Conference?

Initially, in Tirana and throughout the whole country the meetings of the party organizations had been held, meetings which were characterized by the political, ideological and organizational maturity of the whole Party, by the love which the communists nurtured for the Party, for its leadership and its line, by their determination to carry forward and defend this line resolutely, etc. At these meetings the delegates to the Party Conference of Tirana were elected, too. Up to this point, then, as I said, everything proceeded quite normally. The organization of the Party in Tirana, as the organizations of the Party throughout the country, once again confirmed its maturity and the correctness of the general line of the Party. Precisely when the delegates had been elected and were preparing themselves for the Conference, the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana was ordered to launch into urgent action the secret agents prepared long before, discontented elements, etc. The reason for this haste of Belgrade is easily understood:

¹ The 3rd Congress of the PLA was held in Tirana from May 25 to June 3, 1956.

the revisionist theses and decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU had just been published and the Yugoslav leadership judged that time must not be lost. In their view, a rapid, secret and intensive action in Albania might disturb and completely confuse the situation, otherwise «the Stalinist leadership of Enver Hoxha» could not be shaken. They started to spin the threads of the plot.

Under the pretext of «acquainting» people with and «popularizing» the decisions and theses of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which the whole world was propagating noisily, the agents of the Yugoslavs and other elements condemned by the Party, instructed by the Yugoslav embassy, began secretly to indoctrinate the delegates elected to the Conference. Indeed, a «legal» course was followed: taking advantage of the love which our Party had cultivated for the CPSU, many delegates were «instructed» to demand from the organizations which had elected them that there should be a further «discussion», following the example of the «Soviet sister party», to ensure that «complaints» and «criticism», which would be in conformity with «the new spirit», were made against the leadership of our Party; that the communists were called on to tell «everything» «about the present and the past»; that efforts were made allegedly to «correct the mistakes and distortions» under the disguise of «democracy», «listening to the voice of the masses», «bringing the voice of the base to the Conference», etc., etc.

From the first day of the Conference, and especially in the first sessions of the second day, this «spirit of criticism» was very obvious, indeed the accusations very quickly advanced so far that the situation was becoming grave and disturbing even to the secret organizers of the plot.

Precisely in the middle of the second day of the Conference, quite unexpectedly Nexhmije arrived in Vlora. I had been about a week in Vlora on holiday, although in fact I was working, preparing the report for the 3rd Congress of the Party which was to be held in May that year. Nexhmije told me that that day (I remember clearly it was Sunday, April 15) Mehmet

Shehu and Beqir Balluku had summoned her, and Mehmet Shehu had told her that «the situation in the Conference is serious», «they are demanding the rehabilitation of Koçi Xoxe, Tuk Jakova and Bedri Spahiu», calling for «links with Tito and the Yugoslav party», etc. «I am telling you these things», Mehmet Shehu had concluded, «so that you go to Vlora to inform Comrade Enver and we think that it is necessary that he personally should come to the Conference.»

Later I shall explain why Mehmet Shehu gave this information, why he saw it «necessary» that I should go to the Conference and what was his true role in this plot. Here I want to point out that even without Mehmet Shehu's «request», after what Nexhmije told me, I could not have stayed a moment longer in Vlora. I ordered my car and two hours later was back in Tirana.

I immediately summoned Mehmet Shehu and Beqir Balluku (who officially was the delegate of the Central Committee to the Conference, but in fact, as was proved later, he was the «delegate» of the Yugoslav secret service). Hysni Kapo was present at this meeting, too. I demanded from Beqir Balluku especially that he informed me in detail about what was being done and said at the Conference and, alternately flushing red and turning pale, he began:

«Yesterday, as soon as Fiqret Shehu finished delivering the report, they bombarded us with questions. The questions are... hard, shattering: 'Why is the Central Committee not acting quickly and extensively to popularize the 20th Congress of the Soviet party?'; 'Are we going to adopt its theses and decisions as the sister parties have done?!'; 'Does the Central Committee think that the decisions taken against Koçi Xoxe, Tuk Jakova, Bedri Spahiu and others should be re-examined in the light of the 20th Congress?'; 'Why has the publication in the press of articles and materials of the sister parties, which have been written in the spirit of the 20th Congress, been banned by the Central Committee of the Party?'; 'Why has the leadership of our Party not condemned Stalin's cult of the individual, as the others have done, and are there

manifestations of it amongst us?'; 'How does the leadership of our Party judge the Yugoslav question?'; 'Why are we not linking ourselves with the CPY like the others?...'

After mentioning a number of other such questions (the formulation of them may have been different, but in essence they are identical with these I mentioned above), Balluku concluded:

«These were the questions which were raised yesterday and the contributions of the delegates are developing in this spirit.»

«Did all the delegates ask such questions, and did they all speak in this spirit?!» I asked him there and then.

Balluku was silent for a moment, red-faced, and looked at Mehmet Shehu, but since Shehu sat like a mummy, he cleared his throat and replied:

«No! Only some comrades spoke about these problems and in this spirit, however, they are setting the tone for the Conference.»

«And did you give the proper reply to these questions and accusations raised against the Party and its line?»

«Yes, I gave it, but as it turns out, the problem has reached a serious stage. They are continuing to raise these questions. Therefore, Comrade Mehmet Shehu and I thought we should inform you and ask you to go to the Conference yourself to reply to them...»

«That is clear!» I interrupted Beqir Balluku. «You did well to inform me and ask me to come back. We shall go immediately to the Conference and not we, but those elements who are trying to put a spoke in the wheel and to distort our correct line, should be afraid of the confrontation. But before we go there I have something I must say to you.

«First, from what I heard from you, it is clear that we are facing a hostile attack which, undoubtedly, is not only inspired, but also organized. How and by whom we shall find out, indeed very quickly, but my opinion is that the Yugoslavs have had not only a finger but a whole arm in this pie. We shall look at this, too. However, I am of the opinion that

you, Beqir Balluku, as the delegate of the Central Committee of the Party, should not have allowed the situation to reach this point. You know the line of the Party and our stand on all those problems which a few 'bold spirits' are now raising, seeking their 're-examination', is more than clear. We have discussed all those problems and taken collective decisions on them at the proper time and I am not aware that any of you is unclear about them, let alone opposed to them.»

«That is so!» put in Mehmet Shehu in a low voice. «We have been in agreement and said so.»

«Then, why was it necessary for me to come to cope with the situation and to give the answer to questions which you know very well?!» I asked Mehmet Shehu and Beqir Balluku. «From every stand-point, this is not only incorrect, but also impermissible for main leaders of a party. All of us must defend the things which all of us have settled and decided. Nevertheless,» I continued, «the main thing now is to deal with the existing situation and, since you considered it in order that I should do this work, I will certainly do it.

«The second thing I wanted to say to you is about the tactic which must be pursued. I think I should act in this way: I shall ask for the floor immediately and quietly, without attacking the accusers for the time being, I shall make the delegates clear about the essence of the truth in connection with the questions and base accusations which have been raised. I shall explain what the stand of our Party has been and is on those problems, how we have acted, and from what positions the accusations are raised and where they lead to, if they are allowed to become established. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of the delegates are sound elements loyal to the Party and, if any of them are confused, matters will soon be made clear to them. In regard to those 'bold spirits' who want a revisioning, I shall deal with them concretely in the second phase when the delegates have been made clear about the truth. I shall demand that each of these elements explain to the Conference from what positions he raises these filthy accusations, on whose behalf he

is speaking and who has inspired him. I am convinced that, confronted with the truth, they will be exposed and discredited.

So, in the afternoon of April 15, I went to the Tirana Conference and followed the tactic which I outlined above. I must say that as soon as I entered the Conference hall I was surrounded by an atmosphere which gave me even greater confidence and strength: as soon as they saw me the delegates rose to their feet and burst into applause and cheers for the Party and its Central Committee. Excitement and joy began to appear in their faces. It was clear, the comrades were being freed from an anxiety which had disturbed and worried them for nearly two days on end. I was even more convinced of the truth of this as soon as I began to speak. The explanation in a comradely spirit which I began to make of the problems, the arguments which I raised to prove the correctness of the general line pursued by the Party, very quickly electrified the hall. Time after time the delegates shouted from the body of the hall:

«That is the truth! Long live the Party!»

Only a few individuals were out of tune with this general spirit: when all the delegates rose to their feet they were obliged to stand up with the majority, but they did not applaud or cheer. Of course, we did not want their applause, even if it cost us nothing. They had to be gripped firmly in the vice, to admit through their own mouths that in all the things they had raised they proceeded from hostile anti-Albanian and anti-party positions, that they had carried out the orders and «directives» of the Trotskyite Yugoslav leadership, and for all this evil work they would have to render account. On the following day, April 16, in particular, I had to deal especially with these elements. As I said, the phase of quietly clearing up the problems in principle had ended with success. Now it was the time for the devastating attack on the plotters and their tools at the Conference. I called on one of them by name and demanded that he «explain» to us there and then what had impelled him in the accusations which he made!

At first he began with a show of «boldness», but then began to mumble that he had brought forward «the opinion of his basic organization».

«Leave your basic organization out of this!» I told him. «First of all, explain to us what you were doing in the car of the Yugoslav embassy on such and such a date, where you went and what instructions you received?!»

An excited ripple ran through the hall.

«It was a mistake,» the tool of the Yugoslavs dared to «defend» himself. «I thought it was an Albanian car.»

«Let us assume that at first you made a mistake,» I continued with his «logic», «but when you got in and heard them speaking Serbian, did Serbian sound to you like Albanian?!»

The whole of the hall burst into laughter. The agent of the Yugoslavs was deathly pale. He did not know what straw to cling to and what to say. We continued in this way with two or three others who, up till yesterday, had shown themselves «unrestrained» and «very bold» but were now left completely isolated and discredited.

After this there was virtually no further need for me to intervene. The delegates began to speak and, with the maturity, courage and the spirit of criticism and self-criticism which have always characterized our communists, ensured that the proceedings of the Party Conference of Tirana were carried through to the end with complete success.

The attempt to turn it into the first action to overthrow the sound leadership of the PLA and change the situation in Albania was nipped in the bud.

During the Conference, and especially after it, we made a dispassionate analysis of what had occurred and, as I said, on the basis of an endless series of facts we arrived at the conclusion that everything had been organized by the Titoite leadership through the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana. Likewise, as early as those days we arrived at the correct conclusion that it was the revisionist platform of the 20th Congress of the CPSU which had inspired and encouraged both the Yugo-

slav leadership and its agents within our ranks to undertake this hostile attempt.

After the group of conspirators at the Tirana Conference was routed, some of its participants were expelled from the Party and some others, those who turned out to be in contact with the Yugoslav embassy (because at that time we had no facts about the Soviet embassy) were handed over to the court.

At that time, however, because of the level of our knowledge, we did not manage to discover and attack the most powerful implement of foreign agencies who, on this occasion, set in action by the Yugoslav UDB, secretly played the main role in the plot hatched up. This was Mehmet Shehu. The facts which had to do with his stand at the Conference did not permit us to arrive at any conclusion other than the ones we did. Now, from analysis of earlier and later events, especially of the facts which we discovered after his suicide on December 18, 1981, the Party has arrived at precise and completely proven conclusions.

However, before I speak about the role and conspiratorial aims of Mehmet Shehu and his enemy group at the Tirana Conference in 1956 and after it, up till the moment when he killed himself, I consider it necessary to go back to the past to show who Mehmet Shehu really was, where he came from and whom he served.

From the investigations following the suicide of Mehmet Shehu and from the documents in the possession of the Party, it results that Mehmet Shehu was an agent recruited by the Americans from the time he attended Fultz's school in Tirana. On Fultz's orders, Mehmet Shehu went to study in a military school in Italy, on the orders of the American secret service he was sent to Spain to penetrate into the ranks of the International Brigades. The aim of the American secret service was to provide its agent with the «aura» of an «internationalist fighter» so he could be used for long-term aims in Albania later.

After the defeat of the anti-fascist war in Spain, Mehmet Shehu went to a refugee camp in France where he stayed

for three years, at a time when many of his comrades escaped from it. In the camp he was recruited as an agent of the British Intelligence Service also. He was taken out of the camp by an officer of the German Gestapo and one of the Italian SIM, passed through Italy, where he was held two months, and was then handed over in Durrës to the Albanian notorious spy in the pay of the Italian secret service Man Kukaleshi, who released him after 20 days, and Mehmet Shehu went to Mallakastër and linked up with the organization of our Party there.

During the National Liberation War, Mehmet Shehu and his wife Fiqret Sanxhaktari were recruited as agents of the Yugoslavs, too, by Dušan Mugoša. Mugoša began his work with Mehmet Shehu in Vlora in the spring and summer of 1943 and intensified it even more when the pair of them «arranged» that they should be together in the 1st Shock Brigade which we formed in August of that year. While in the brigade Mugoša capped his work neatly. He recruited Fiqret Sanxhaktari and arranged her betrothal to Mehmet Shehu for the aims of his secret activity. Like every foreign secret agency, the Titoite agency, which was emerging and taking form «in the flames of the war», operated with its recruits for short-term and long-term aims: in the short term, immediately, Mugoša demanded and urged his agent Mehmet Shehu to commit the maximum number of sectarian acts with the aim that later, when necessary, the Yugoslavs could use this sectarianism, which they implanted and encouraged themselves, to accuse the leadership of our Party of «sectarianism», just as they did (as I said above, this was consummated at Berat in November 1944). At the same time, in the context of «collaboration with the allies», the Titoite secret agency learned a great deal from the experience of the Intelligence Service. Apart from what I said above, it also took into account that it might suffer defeat in Albania, therefore, it prepared Mehmet and Fiqret Shehu as agents for difficult times in the future. To this end, the former was given the secret pseudonym MISH (Mehmet Ismail Shehu),

and the latter the pseudonym FISARI (Fiqret Sanxhaktari).

From the written documents of Mehmet Shehu, which have now been found, it is proved that he was a member of the Berat plot, together with Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru, irrespective of the fact that he was not at Berat in November 1944.

Thus, in a letter addressed to the Central Committee of the Party [to Koçi Xoxe] in December 1944, Mehmet Shehu attacks the line of the Party as «sectarian» and «localist» and describes its sound leadership as a «clique within the Party». And in order to leave no doubt as to whom he was referring, Mehmet Shehu, enthusiastic over the anti-party turn at Berat, writes with his own hand that «if the Party... had not made the turn which it is making we would certainly be heading for disaster.»¹

Naturally Mehmet Shehu, as a recruited agent of the Yugoslavs, would take an anti-party stand and unite with the plotters. At the same time, through this letter of solidarity he found the opportunity to express his personal discontent with the leadership of the Party and, especially with me, and to demand from Koçi Xoxe and those who directed Koçi Xoxe a reward for the services which he had rendered and was rendering.

During the war, too, Mehmet Shehu had displayed signs of discontent, because at the 1st National Conference of the Communist Party of Albania at Labinot in March 1943 he was elected only a candidate member of the Central Committee and at Përmet, at the Anti-fascist National Liberation Congress in May 1944, he was not promoted to general, like several others whom he scorned.

Mehmet Shehu wanted the mistakes which he had made and continued to make by violating the line of the Party and failing to carry out the orders of the General Staff, over which he had been criticized several times, to be forgotten,

¹ From the letter of Mehmet Shehu addressed to the CC of the CPA [to Koçi Xoxe] on December 10, 1944. CAP.

and now it is quite clear that he did not do all this without a purpose. So he had used terror in the villages through which the 1st Brigade passed to discredit the Party and the partisan forces, elevated to a legend the «incursion» of two battalions of the 1st Brigade to rescue the General Staff from the German-Ballist encirclement, although he not only did not rescue it (because the Staff broke through the encirclement with its own forces), but Mehmet Shehu deliberately lost two weeks, in place of two days, taking the forces of the Brigade over a number of dangerous paths, thus, causing many brave fighters of this Brigade to lay down their lives heroically.

During the war Mehmet Shehu opposed the order of the General Staff for the 1st Division to cross the Shkumbin River and move to the north. This opposition of Mehmet Shehu's was not something accidental. It was in accord with the Anglo-American plan to prevent the movement of formations of the ANLA from the south to Central and Northern Albania and with the great pressure which the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command exerted on the General Command of our Army to stop the movement of the Division to the north¹, and prevent any attack on the forces of Abaz Kupi, describing this movement and the vigorous development of our fighting actions as «interference in its strategic plans». However, our Party and the General Staff had their own strategic plans for the liberation of the whole of Albania as quickly as possible. Our categorical order for the immediate movement of the 1st Division to the north resulted in foiling the Anglo-American plan and the services of Mehmet Shehu towards his patrons.

Hence, Mehmet Shehu came to Albania and fought not as a communist and partisan, but as a mercenary sent by the Anglo-Americans to serve their plans for the future of Albania.² After his suicide, a program written by his own hand

1 See Enver Hoxha «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania» (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, pp. 248-268, Eng. ed.

2 That Mehmet Shehu was a secret agent of the Americans and served them, is also borne out, among others, by a letter dated Fe-

in 1942, at the time when he came to Albania, was found in his safe. This was nothing but a bourgeois-democratic program which made no mention at all of socialism and the communist party, but of many parties, just as the Anglo-American missions and the reactionary groups which supported them tried to bring about in the period immediately after Liberation. We are now in possession of documents which fully prove that Mehmet Shehu was an agent of the Intelligence Service, too. In these documents figure his name and some coded pseudonyms such as BAB-008, etc. From them it emerges that Mehmet Shehu had even received money for his services and the centre instructed to leave him at peace, which meant that he was one of those potential agents that are left, in the language of spying agencies, «dormant» so as to be used when needed.¹

bruary 6, 1944 which the CIA agent Larry Post (who later was sent by the American secret service to Albania) wrote to another secret agent of the Americans Hasan Reçi, «I repeated many times to them that we wanted **facts, facts, and facts** about every situation and everything.» stressed Larry Post in this letter and continued: «Transmit to Mjekrra — Mehmet Shehu — my warmest greetings. Is it possible for him to send me a report on his situation and activity?! You do not write whether you have contacted him...! P.S. Mjekrra may read this letter, too.» (*From the original copy of the letter in CAP.*)

1 From its assessments of the situation in Albania in the end of 1944, the British secret service envisaged the eventual organization of an opposition to the new state of people's democracy which was created. They included Mehmet Shehu among the main elements of this opposition. This is borne out by a document dated November 10, 1944, the photocopy of which has been taken from the archives of the Foreign Office, London, and which, among other things, says about Mehmet Shehu, «... he is a communist, but his personal ambition exceeds his loyalty to the Party». (*FO 371/43554 PRO.*) Whereas in another document dated February 10, 1945, the section of the British Intelligence Service for Albania (*Force No. 399*) describes Mehmet Shehu «to be the only man with sufficient following to prove dangerous to Hoxha, should they disagree» (read: over the program of the British Mehmet Shehu brought with him on his return to Albania in 1942, which was found in his safe after his suicide. See p. 599 of this book). WO-204.

Thus, this hidden agent of the American secret service, later trained by the Intelligence Service in the refugee camps of former volunteers from the International Brigades in France to sabotage the National Liberation War in Albania, linked, as I wrote above, during the war with the Yugoslav OZNA (UDB), could not but go further down the road of betrayal: immediately after Liberation, on the orders of his boss, Fultz, who at that time was official representative of the American mission in Tirana, he was not long in infiltrating into the Soviet secret service. We are now in possession of a letter which Mehmet Shehu sent Major Ivanov immediately after Liberation, couched in so many vilifying terms against the line of the Party and full of hatred for the sound cadres who defended this line, especially against the General Secretary Enver Hoxha, Hysni Kapo and others. This proves that Mehmet Shehu, apart from his links as a secret agent of the Yugoslavs, had also established links with a greater power, with the secret service of the Soviet Union. This is what, among other things, he wrote to the Major of the Soviet secret service, Ivanov, chief of the Soviet military mission in Tirana:

«... I feel it my duty to tell you my opinion about the things which I see and express what I think. I know very well that this action of mine on this occasion is contrary to the rules of the organizational line of our Party, but having confidence in you... I take the responsibility of referring directly to you.»¹

The letter in the form of a report to Ivanov goes on to make an all-round attack on the line of the Party, which led the National Liberation War and triumphed. He attacks the historic periods and events from the past struggle of the Party, such as the Conference of Peza, the Congress of Përmet, and the 1st National Conference of the Party, and is in complete conformity with the anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian views of Velimir Stojnić and Koçi Xoxe. Like Velimir Stojnić, Mehmet Shehu, too, describes Enver Hoxha and the

¹ From the letter of Mehmet Shehu addressed to Major Ivanov. CAP.

other comrades as «a CLIQUE»¹ which must be purged, going further than the decisions which were taken at Berat. «In order to make the change,» writes Mehmet Shehu, «a total revolution in our Party is required» (implying a total purge).

While describing Tito as «a head of INTERNATIONAL value» and in order to fulfil his personal ambition which he could not achieve during his struggle full of vacillations and sectarian and anarchist mistakes, Mehmet Shehu closes his letter to Major Ivanov with certain «conclusions» and appeals written in capital letters.

«Amongst us, Albanian communists,» he writes, «there is no one as capable as Tito in Yugoslavia... In order to help us to advance well, it is necessary that we have direct and immediate aid from the CI [Communist International] or the CPY [Communist Party of Yugoslavia]² and this is needed quickly because the situation has given rise to very important problems.» (After Mehmet Shehu's suicide, in his safe was found a note in his own hand about his having written a letter to Ivanov.)

In this context it is easy to understand the acrobatic twists and contradictory stands of Mehmet Shehu during the National Liberation War and after Liberation, before and after the 8th and 11th Plenums of the Central Committee (in 1948), sometimes defending the Yugoslav theses, sometimes opposing them under the protection of Soviet military advisers.

At the 8th Plenum Nako Spiru was denounced and condemned as an enemy by the Yugoslavs and Koçi Xoxe, while, as I wrote above, Mehmet Shehu was described as «anti-Yugoslav» and the «attacks» and «pressure» of Tito's delegates and Koçi Xoxe to remove him from the army were stepped up. However, these same «critics» from Belgrade, indeed, in Tito's name, insisted that Mehmet Shehu should not be completely eliminated, but on the contrary, should be given the

1 The words in capitals are quoted from the original letter.

2 Underlining and brackets in this excerpt of the letter are ours (Editorial Board).

portfolio of a ministry(!). He was appointed minister of communications, that is, a member of the government.¹

After the letters of the CPSU (B) to the CC of the CPY, after the 11th Plenum of the CC of our Party, Mehmet Shehu adapted himself to the line of the Party, defending the Soviet Union and Stalin and «exposing» Tito and his clique as agents of imperialism, as our whole Party did. Despite the thundering of Mehmet Shehu against the Tito clique, Belgrade remained silent. The Yugoslav UDB, in collaboration with the American CIA and the British Intelligence Service, did not denounce him, because he was their potential agent infiltrated into the Soviet secret service, the trust of which he enjoyed.

Following the death of Stalin, the team that came to

1 At the 11th Plenum Kristo Themelko declared: «The Yugoslavs liked Mehmet Shehu.» Indeed, at one moment he turned to Mehmet Shehu and said: «It's true that I have a whole load of mistakes, but don't forget that whenever we went to Belgrade, it was you Tito received first and not me!» «As for the criticisms in December 1947,» continued Kristo, «true, the Yugoslavs criticized him, but they told me to exert pressure on the leadership to appoint him a minister! They wanted to keep sweet with Mehmet Shehu, because they were afraid of him!» (*From the minutes of the 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, CAP.*)

Further evidence of Mehmet Shehu's «special» links with the Titoites is provided by his «confidential» correspondence with Dušan Mugoša. Thus, in the letter which he sent Mugoša on February 9, 1944, Mehmet Shehu wrote among other things: «The letter which you sent me reassures me...; there you show what special personal interest you have taken [in me]. The letter reassures me, comforts me, advises, helps and teaches me. I am keeping the letter and it will serve me as your photograph with which to remember you... Ah! If only you were to desert and come back to us we would keep you under cover as an illegal fighter!»

In the letter of April 22, 1944, on the occasion of Mugoša's departure from Albania, after a dithyramb of praise and describing him with servility as «our teacher», Mehmet Shehu calls the Albanian communists «communist brigands», a «hotch-potch of bitter vegetables» and concludes: «Oh, Salë! [the pseudonym of Dušan Mugoša]... To whom will you entrust this special mission...?» (*The letters are kept in the CAP.*)

power condemned Beria, the chief of the Soviet KGB, for many violations of the law. We asked Mehmet Shehu to examine whether mistakes had also been made in the organs of our Ministry of Internal Affairs of which he was the head. Mehmet Shehu was afraid that his links with the Soviet KGB or with the Western secret agencies had been discovered and he might suffer the same fate as Beria. He went to the Soviet ambassador Levichkin, whom he assured of his loyalty to the new Khrushchevite team that had come to power, and sought Soviet protection, because, according to his statements, «Enver Hoxha regards me with suspicion» and he was very disturbed about this. Levichkin advised Mehmet Shehu to come to me and make his position clear, while ensuring him that he, Levichkin, would protect him. Levichkin personally came to me, told me of Mehmet Shehu's worries and that he had advised him to come to me. Mehmet Shehu did not come for two or three weeks. At a subsequent meeting, Levichkin asked me:

«Have you talked with Mehmet Shehu?»

«He has not sought any meeting with me,» I replied.

«Perhaps you should summon him,» said Levichkin.

«By no means!» I said. «I have no reason to summon him. On the contrary, he must come to me himself and make a thorough self-criticism. It is true, we are friends with you, but I consider it a very grave mistake that he went to talk with you about a problem which has to do with us, without first talking to me, as General Secretary of the Party.»

Levichkin was alarmed and «ordered» Mehmet Shehu to come to me. First he sent Fiqret Shehu to feel my pulse. She came to enquire what was wrong with Mehmet Shehu, who was «extremely worried» (as if she herself knew nothing!).

«We have no problem with him,» I replied, «so you had better ask him whether he has something against us!»

In this way Mehmet Shehu was reassured that we had not made any discovery and had no suspicions about him. On Levichkin's urging too he came to me, made a self-criticism and also made a self-criticism in the Political Bureau and in the Plenum of the Central Committee, saying that he had made a

serious mistake in going to the Soviet ambassador to complain about the General Secretary of the Central Committee without discussing the matter with him and without raising the problem in the leadership of the Party.

Later, something else occurred which greatly alarmed and worried Mehmet Shehu: Sokrat Bufi, a party cadre who was studying in Moscow at that time, sent the Central Committee a letter in which, amongst other things, he said: «Mehmet Shehu is a provocateur...» Mehmet Shehu was furious about this and demanded insistently in the Secretariat and in the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and several times to me personally that Sokrat Bufi should be arrested and condemned. We did not accept his proposal, because to condemn him simply for the fact that he had made a criticism of a party cadre would be contrary to the norms of the Party. Since Sokrat Bufi was appointed vice-chairman of the Executive Committee of a district, the doubts of Mehmet Shehu that we had discovered some of his sins were further aroused and he continued to live and work in feverish anxiety.

The coming to power of Khrushchev and the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which brought reconciliation between the Soviet revisionists and the Titoites, found Mehmet Shehu still in this state of anxiety.

After the abortive attempt through Tuk Jakova and Bedri Spahiu to change the situation in Albania, the foreign secret agencies considered that Mehmet Shehu, too, should be brought into action. I say the **foreign secret agencies**, because at those moments the aims of the Soviets and the Titoites, as well as of the imperialists, with American imperialism at the head, for the disruption and destruction of the socialist countries by means of the «Khrushchev line», were all in accord. Subsequently, of course, after the sound leadership of the Party and state had been replaced with a revisionist team, the foreign secret agencies would commence their usual fights, each of them striving to take Albania under its own wing.

Hence, Mehmet Shehu was ordered by the Soviets and the Yugoslavs (but with the approval of the British and

American agencies) to go into action with all his group in order to achieve in Albania what had been or was being achieved in the other former countries of people's democracy. Precisely at this point begins the implication of Mehmet Shehu in the Party Conference of Tirana, where the task of first secretary of the Party Committee of the district was performed by his wife and long-term agent of the Yugoslavs, Fiqret Shehu. By chance (but also through the secret machinations of Mehmet Shehu) the other agent of his group, Beqir Balluku, was appointed the delegate of the CC of the Party to the Conference. In regard to the others, the «claque» of the group of plotters, the need did not arise for MISH, FISARI or Balluku to be involved in their orientation. No, the chiefs of the plot, especially Mehmet Shehu, had to operate in secrecy, far behind the scenes, so they could escape in any unexpected eventuality. The employees of the Yugoslav embassy and their henchmen long known and condemned by our Party, such as Liri Gega, Dali Ndreu, Hulusi Spahiu and others, were to deal directly with the «claque», as they did.

On this occasion, the duty of the chiefs of the plot initially was to create for elements from the floor, concealed under the mandate of «delegates», conditions and possibilities to vent all their spleen and give the tone to the Conference. Only when they were assured that everything was proceeding normally could other more obvious and decisive steps be taken. Beqir Balluku and Fiqret Shehu accomplished this secret task. The fact is that from the first day of the Conference they created all the possibilities for the enemy elements to pour out all the filth of their anti-party questions and, when the time came for discussion, through their «inactivity», allegedly because «they were taken by surprise and dumbfounded» and were «incapable» of «explaining» things to the enemies, they arranged that enemy elements were given the floor one after the other, and this brought about that the first phase of the plot proceeded as they had envisaged and planned behind the scenes.

Precisely when the anti-party discussions at the Confe-

rence blazed up, Mehmet Shehu and Begir Balluku «considered it in order» to demand that I go to the Conference. Why? They had two main aims for this urgent demand which they made:

First, to place me personally directly under the main anti-party attack, to raise the tempers higher and, if I were faced with an irresistible attack or retreated, then Mehmet Shehu would manoeuvre in the troubled waters that would be created to disrupt the situation further, to take the lead and, coming out openly, carry through to the end the scenario prepared by his patrons.

Second, Mehmet Shehu had also taken account of the possible failure of the plot, indeed, even he was afraid when he saw the reins were slipping from his hands. Not knowing that their leader was Mehmet Shehu himself, the enemy elements, «the clique», did not spare their attacks on him and his wife, since they identified them with the sound leadership. In such a case he considered it in order that I should come, do battle myself, and if he saw that the plot had failed, then he would act as was his custom: would come out «beside me», would launch the «attack» against minor elements, the pawns in the game, and no doubt, against Tito, too, and as before, would wait in gloom and anxiety for more appropriate moments.

However, his patrons, too, both the new ones (Khrushchev and company) and the old ones (the Anglo-Americans and the Titoites), sensed and knew that those situations which existed then in the other parties and countries of people's democracy did not exist in Albania. The unity of the PLA was powerful. In the 15 years of its existence the PLA had proved that it did not tolerate mistakes, slips and deviations, its political and ideological past was pure, it had strong links with the masses and enjoyed the boundless love and respect of the people. In such a sound situation it was not at all easy for the enemies to stir up anti-party feelings and triumph. It was more likely that everything would burst like a soap bubble, as it did.

The enemies calculated these things well, and understandably, they were not so silly as to destroy their main agent for nothing. On the contrary, they did everything in their power to ensure that he remained as «clean» as possible, attempted in one instance or the other to launch him into the attack, but as soon as they saw he might be in danger they gave him the signal to change his position and come out «on the side» of the sound leadership.

This is what occurred on this occasion and what was to occur even later. As soon as they saw that the Party did not fall into the trap set, Mehmet Shehu and Beqir Balluku retreated into the background and «condemned» the plotters, while Figret Shehu vowed that she had not had the slightest warning, that the plotters had operated «behind her back», that she had been shut up at home preparing the report, etc. Figret Shehu was dismissed as first secretary and the reprimand was recorded on her registration document. At that time, we knew nothing in regard to Feçor Shehu¹, who, it now turns out, was an agent in the service of the UDB and was the liaison agent between the Yugoslav embassy and Mehmet Shehu. Mehmet Shehu personally maintained the direct links with the Soviet embassy, readily exploiting the good relations we had with the Soviet Union at that time.

In the situation which was created after the failure of the Khrushchevite-Titoite plot at the Tirana Conference and the resolute, open unmasking by our Party of the events in Poland, and especially those in Hungary, the UDB of Tito-Ranković ordered their agents Liri Gega, Dali Ndreu and Panajot Plaku to flee to Yugoslavia in order to create an opposition abroad and to fight us through their mouths. The first two were arrested attempting to cross the border, while

1 An anti-party element and sworn enemy of the PSRA. On the proposal of Mehmet Shehu he was appointed minister of Internal Affairs. After the disclosure of the activity of Mehmet Shehu as a secret agent, the true features of Feçor Shehu were revealed, too, and he has been handed over to the organs of justice for investigation of his enemy activity.

Panajot Plaku, with the aid of Mehmet Shehu and his collaborators amongst the officers of the army and the state security, such as the former minister of defence Beqir Balluku and the former minister of internal affairs Kadri Hazbiu, crossed our state border and worked for some time in an allegedly clandestine radio which broadcast the old Titoite poison against our Party and country from the territory of Yugoslavia.

Here it is important to point out that even in the stand towards Dali Ndreu, Liri Gega and Panajot Plaku, not only the continuous anti-Albanian activity of the Titoite leadership, but also the collaboration of the Yugoslavs with the Soviets was clearly obvious. When our organs captured Dali Ndreu and Liri Gega red-handed and placed them in the dock, the Yugoslavs jumped up in rage, and so did Khrushchev. He sent an urgent radiogram to the Soviet ambassador in Tirana Krylov to intervene with me to ensure that the enemies and traitors were not condemned. These were precisely those days of November 1956 when, as I said above, Tito delivered his notorious speech at Pula in which, amongst other things, he called openly for the overthrow of the leadership of the PLA and for my condemnation. Khrushchev sent Krylov with two main instructions: we were not to reply sternly to Tito's speech and not to punish the captured agents who were rendering account before the people's court. We very quickly gave Khrushchev and Tito the answer: in regard to the first instruction, we published articles in the press in which we fired off all our batteries against Tito, Titoism and the speech at Pula; in regard to the second instruction, we gave the agents and traitors the punishment they deserved.

This was bitter medicine for Khrushchev and Tito, but they did not stop their anti-Albanian actions. A little after this, the flight of Panajot Plaku to Yugoslavia was achieved. However, the Titoites were soon to be convinced that they could do us nothing from outside, either through the «oppositions» the Dušan Mugošas tried to set up with the reac-

tionary emigrées, or with the spleen the abject traitor Panajot Plaku vented on us through a so-called clandestine radio, so they sought Khrushchev's help. The Yugoslavs hoped that Khrushchev would exercise pressure on us and influence us so that we would accept Panajot Plaku in Albania with the aim that he, together with their agents and other secret enemies, could carry out the plots and plans of the Yugoslav and the Soviet secret services from inside. Sensing the advantages of this course, Khrushchev was ready to collaborate with Tito, as he did over the Polish and Hungarian question, to mislead the work of the Party Conference of Tirana (1956), etc., therefore, he did not fail to intervene for a «conciliation» with the traitor. As the first step, he told us that he was considering admitting him to the Soviet Union, since Plaku himself had expressed this desire in a letter he had sent Khrushchev.

«He is a traitor,» I told Khrushchev, «and if you accept him in your country, we shall break off our friendship with you. If you do accept him, you must hand him over to us so we can hang him in the middle of the square in Tirana.»¹

This was the end of these old agents of the Titoite clique and, obviously, also of the hopes which both the Titoites and the Khrushchevites had based on them.

However, this by no means meant that from now on we would no longer have to deal with other attempts, traps and plots. Therefore, on no occasion did we permit any lowering of vigilance. On the contrary, our Party of Labour continued persistently with the ideological and political struggle against Titoism, at a time when our contradictions with the Soviet revisionist leadership were steadily mounting. We were heading for the confrontation of June 1960 in Bucharest.

Just as had occurred continually with the Titoites, the Khrushchevites, too, did not spare either their means, their pressure and blackmail or their agents, recruited long before, on

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, p. 354-356, Eng. ed.

the eve of and after this great confrontation. The pawn with which they made their opening move was Liri Belishova. In the summer of that year Belishova was in Beijing with a parliamentary delegation, at the time that the meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions was being held there. Contrary to every party rule and norm, the profound contradictions which had developed in the ranks of the international communist and workers' movement between the Chinese and the Soviets emerged openly at that meeting. In opposition to the stand of the leadership of our Party, which did not want to pronounce itself prematurely on these contradictions, Liri went to the Soviet embassy and reported all that the Chinese had told her. We sent Liri Belishova two letters, one to Beijing and one that reached her on the way back to Moscow, in which we criticized her for her stand in Beijing and explained the stand she must take in Moscow. However, Liri Belishova, as an agent of the Soviets, not only did not follow the advice of the leadership of the Party, but met Kozlov, talked with him, listened to him and even handed over to the Khrushchevites our letters (radiograms) which, when we asked her for them, she told us she «had burnt».

When she returned to Albania, Liri Belishova took Comrade Hysni aside and said to him, «Let us keep Comrade Enver out of these clashes,» but Hysni denounced Liri. She had also met Mehmet Shehu and told him, «Don't talk about Khrushchev, because everything you say reaches his ears.» Mehmet Shehu reluctantly admitted this much later, when he saw that the leadership of the Party was condemning Liri Belishova. What other pressure Liri Belishova had exerted on him is not known.

Likewise, we do not know what Kosygin said to Mehmet Shehu when he was in hospital in Moscow for treatment, Mehmet Shehu told us that Kosygin had tried to convince him that China must be condemned and this «had angered» him, so he left the hospital and returned to Albania. Now it turns out that Mehmet Shehu, together with Fiqret Shehu, had been summoned to a meeting with Mikoyan at which Andropov

and I think also the chief of security Shelepin were present and talked for four hours with them.

In the end, apparently, the Soviets decided that they should set Mehmet Shehu in action for the subjugation of the leadership of our Party. I say «in the end», because some months earlier, in February of that year, they not only hesitated, but did not even want to inform Mehmet Shehu of the quarrels which they had with the Chinese.

As I have written in my book of memoirs «The Khrushchevites», when we arrived in Moscow for a top-level meeting in the framework of the Comecon and the Warsaw Treaty, they informed me that Mikoyan sought an urgent meeting «with Enver Hoxha alone». I insisted that Mehmet Shehu should be present, too, and since despite their wishes I took Mehmet Shehu with me, the Soviets hesitated, frowned, but were faced «with an accomplished fact».¹ In order to avoid angering Mehmet Shehu, they justified themselves for not inviting him to the meeting on the grounds that they had decided to speak «only with the first secretaries of sister parties». Now it turns out that this «reason» was a bluff. They did not want Mehmet Shehu to learn what had occurred, because they knew that he was the man of many agencies and might carry information to the Americans and the British. However, the events evolved and in May-June the Soviets changed their tune.

Meanwhile, Mehmet Shehu saw that the leadership of our Party was not going to tolerate Khrushchev's plans against Marxism-Leninism and the international communist and workers' movement any longer. Our Party worked out the platform for the stand it would take at Bucharest, retaining its right to present its views at the regular meeting of all parties (in November 1960 in Moscow). At that time Mehmet Shehu was in a quandary: whom to please and whom to displease? To place himself in opposition to the leadership of the Party was of no benefit to him, because he would suffer the fate of

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, pp. 387-389, Eng. ed.

Liri Belishova and all the other anti-party enemies. However, as a man of many foreign secret agencies he had to take the Americans, the British and the Yugoslavs into his calculations, besides us and the Soviets.

Which way would this multiple agent turn in this complicated situation?!

However, a way out was presented to him. At this time Mehmet Shehu was sent to New York at the head of a government delegation to the UNO. He travelled on the British trans-Atlantic luxury liner «Queen Elizabeth». We knew that Tito, also, was travelling on that ship, but it never crossed our minds that Mehmet Shehu might meet Tito. Now we learn from his fellow-travellers who were his collaborators and are now in jail that Harry Fultz of the American CIA and Randolph Churchill, who was an Intelligence Service agent but figured on the passenger list as a journalist, were also aboard. During this trip of several days, Mehmet Shehu, being their agent, had secret meetings and talks with Tito, Fultz, and R. Churchill, informed them of the situation in and the stands of our Party, the acute contradictions which were arising with the Soviet Union and the stand which the leadership of our Party intended to take in Moscow.

The strategies of the three agencies, Yugoslav, American and British, were in accord and they suggested to their super-agent that he should unreservedly «support» the correct stands of the leadership of the Party, which would lead to the great breach and rupture with the Soviet Union. It would be no loss to them that we supported China. On the contrary, this «friendship» with their secret pro-American, pro-Titoite friends (such as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping) would serve their longer-range strategic plans (to involve us in the liberal policies of China, such as it began later with the Nixon-Zhou Enlai meeting, or when Zhou Enlai urged Beqir Balluku to act relying on a Yugoslavia-Rumania-Albania alliance), etc.

Mehmet Shehu returned from the United States of America full of «courage» and became more catholic than the Pope, was unrestrained in his «defence» of the line of our Party

against the plans and stands of Khrushchev and the revisionist Soviet leadership. Indeed, he organized «scenes» in order to boost himself and thoroughly cement our trust in him. When we were at the Meeting of 81 parties in Moscow, in November of that year, he proposed we should leave the house in which the Soviets had placed us because «they are capable of poisoning us». (He was afraid rather on his own account.) When we went to our embassy in Moscow, through the secret microphones which the Soviets had planted and which we discovered, he «transmitted» to them a fiery message eulogizing our Party and its first secretary, while using all the gravest insults against them for their disgraceful act in eaves-dropping on their close friends, such as the Party of Labour of Albania and its leaders. Mehmet Shehu stubbornly opposed our return by ship via the Black Sea and organized our return by train through Austria and Italy. We agreed to these measures, because we no longer trusted the Soviets, either, but with the zeal which he displayed he strengthened our trust in him and also protected himself. Nevertheless, Mehmet Shehu could not but be worried that he might pay with his head for the «betrayal» which he was committing against his Soviet patrons as a disobedient agent.

There was no lack of some hints and needling. In my book «The Khrushchevites» I have recorded that Kosygin said to me, «There are enemies in your leadership».¹ However, when I called on Mehmet Shehu to translate this to me better, because, although I understood Russian, I had never mastered those cyrillic letters which hindered me from reading and learning it well, Kosygin shut his mouth and said that I «had not understood him properly». There, too, I have written about the pressure exerted on us by the Soviet militarymen who had an argument with Mehmet Shehu, too. Now another explanation can be given for why Khrushchev at our last meeting said to us: «This is how MacMillan wanted to speak

¹ See Enver Hoxha, «The Khrushchevites» (Memoirs), Tirana 1980, p. 432, Eng. ed.

to me», at which Mehmet Shehu jumped to his feet and we broke off the meeting. Apparently, when Khrushchev mentioned the Englishman MacMillan, Mehmet Shehu feared that he might open a wound which would cause him great pain.

After the Meeting of 81 parties, Khrushchev and company tried to patch up their relations with us. This they tried to do at our 4th Congress, with the letters they sent us, as well as through the Chinese, etc. They also tried to turn us to their course through economic and military pressures, but they failed in all directions. We maintained our immovable stand. We expelled the Soviets from the base at Vlora; they cut off their economic and military aid, even broke off diplomatic relations.

Precisely at the extremely difficult and delicate moments which our Party and country were experiencing in 1960 we uncovered the dangerous plot of Teme Sejko, hatched up and supported by the American 6th Fleet, the renegades of Belgrade and the Greek chauvinist circles. In collaboration with one another, these forces of darkness had thrown into action their long-standing agent Teme Sejko and a number of other agents around him to prepare and cause «internal» disorders to break out in Albania which would serve as a pretext for a foreign military intervention against our country. However, although we were deeply involved in the struggle against our new Khrushchevite enemies, we had not relaxed for a moment our vigilance towards our old enemies — the imperialists, the chauvinists and the Belgrade renegades. We discovered their plot, smashed it and, at the 4th Congress of the Party,¹ spoke about it and publicly denounced it and its organizers. At those moments the Soviets pretended to be totally ignorant of and even alarmed about it, so much so that Gomulka asked that a commission from the Warsaw Treaty be set to «verify» things, which we turned down! What all this alarm of the Soviets was about, this we did not know at that time.

¹ The 4th Congress of the PLA carried out its proceedings from 13-20 February 1961.

Now it is fully proved that at a time when the Americans, the Yugoslav and Greek chauvinists were secretly hatching up the plot of Teme Sejko and company, the Soviets got air of this plot through their secret agents and made the most of it as a very favourable occasion to maintain and strengthen their positions in Albania, which were being shaken.

Let us not forget that the Soviet fleet was still at Vlora. Let us not forget that those were days and months when we were at daggers drawn with the Soviets. The Soviets sensed that their end was coming in Albania and feared that their naval fleet might be driven from Vlora. We had just launched the attack in Bucharest and were preparing the main and general attack for the Meeting of communist and workers' parties which was to be held in Moscow in November that year. To forestall the evil the Soviets threatened us in many ways, indeed, in one letter they wrote that we must extinguish the «spark» which was kindled at Bucharest.¹ We continued resolutely on our course. Then, they tried to find a way out through another more «powerful» and more «menacing» means: through their secret agents Mehmet Shehu, Beqir Balluku and Kadri Hazbiu. They tried to employ the truth about Teme Sejko's plot as a means of pressure and blackmail on us in order to make us kowtow to the Soviets. They even gave Mehmet Shehu, Beqir Balluku and Kadri Hazbiu additional information ensured through the KGB, which confirmed the threat of an attack prepared by the West and the Yugoslavs against our country. After this the Soviets and their agents expected that we would fall into the trap and see our «salvation from the danger» in relying on the Soviets, especially on their fleet in Vlora. Hence, with the card of the imperialist-Yugoslav plot the Soviets said to us: Don't do anything silly, the attack is prepared, imperialism will gobble you up, therefore come to your senses, because you need us! What a masquerade! These plans and base calcula-

¹ See Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 19, p. 128, Alb. ed.

tions by the Khrushchevites in 1960 about the plot of Teme Sejko are very similar to the plans which the Titoites concocted with Koci Xoxe and Beqir Balluku at the end of 1947 and the beginning of 1948, that we were allegedly under threat of a Greek attack and, therefore, the Yugoslav divisions should come «to defend and save us»!

However, just as we foiled the Titoites' plots and secret plans in 1947 and 1948, we also foiled the plots of the imperialists, the Yugoslavs and the Soviets in 1960. On the basis of many facts and documents which we discovered, we handed Teme Sejko and his network of agents over to the people's court where they admitted through their own mouths, not only their participation in the plot, but also the work that they had done as agents for the Yugoslav, Greek and American secret services.

Naturally, our foiling and public denunciation of the imperialist-Yugoslav plot would alarm the Soviets, as it did. The smashing of the first, American-Yugoslav-Greek, plot automatically blew up the second plot which the Khrushchevites and their agents Mehmet Shehu, Beqir Balluku and others had hatched up in secrecy. The Soviets saw that after this they had their days numbered in Albania. And true enough, very soon we ousted the Soviet naval fleet from Vlora, without it ever crossing our mind that we could rely on it to «save ourselves». This fleet of the Khrushchevites had already become just like the American 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean and we knew that our salvation would not come from relying on it, but from expelling it, as we did.

The fact that we uncovered and foiled this plot right at the outset made Mehmet Shehu draw in his horns.

Meanwhile, our Party pursued the course of Marxism-Leninism and Mehmet Shehu «endorsed» its line, indeed, he greatly advertised his role in these situations and, of course, in the eyes of the Americans and the Yugoslavs posed as if it was he that inspired this course. From the plans which they had made and the secret contacts which they maintained, the Americans and the Yugoslavs knew this, while all the Western

secret agencies were in agreement that their «boy» should thunder against them with such statements as: «We are dancing in the wolf's mouth», etc., etc. They accepted any abuse, content that their agent was climbing higher and higher and might turn the helm of our Party and state towards the West.

Mehmet Shehu zealously continued the «struggle» against the Soviet revisionists, but proceeding from other purposes and aims, quite the opposite of the lofty aims of the Party which worked for the defence of Marxism-Leninism and the supreme interests of our people and socialist Homeland.

The events of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 came about and the Party decided to denounce the Warsaw Treaty, to take our country out of this ill-famed treaty *de jure*, although *de facto* we had withdrawn from it at the end of 1960. On this occasion, Mehmet Shehu delivered the speeches as prime minister and, of course, he presented this to his patrons as his personal victory. The American agency (and those linked with it, first of all, the Titoites) thought that Albania was left isolated and undefended, and since China was far away, it considered that the time had come when our country would turn its face towards the West.

The trump card of the Western and Titoite agencies, Mehmet Shehu, was brought into action. In 1972 he went to Paris for an operation, accompanied by the same team that accompanied him to the UNO, plus his wife Fiqret Shehu. There he made contact with a top figure of the American CIA, who said to him: «What are you doing? You are getting old, you must act!»

Mehmet Shehu reported to him about the situation and the plots which were being prepared (by Beqir Balluku and Abdyl Këllezi and company). The CIA recommended that he should act, but without compromising himself. It proposed three variants for the elimination of Enver Hoxha: 1) through a motor accident; 2) through shooting with a rifle from a distance; or 3) with delayed-action poison. It was left to Mehmet Shehu to put into action the variant he considered most feasible.

Through Feçor Shehu, Mehmet Shehu received the same instructions from the Yugoslav UDB which was completely in agreement with the CIA.

In Paris Mehmet Shehu was also given a sophisticated radio receiver-transmitter which his eldest son, who was an electronics engineer, installed in his house, ready to function.

In fact, Mehmet Shehu had turned, or was to turn, his whole family into a nest of agents, a family of vipers. As we said, Fiqret Shehu had been recruited during the war by Dušan Mugoša and had the pseudonym FISARI, without taking into account what she might have done earlier when she went to Italy on a one- or two-year course during the occupation, or what Liri Gega (and Smith¹) might have done with her when they worked together in the 1st Army Corps. Eventually Mehmet Shehu had made his second son Skënder a collaborator and when he went abroad (especially when he went to study in Sweden), Mehmet Shehu charged him to establish contact with the CIA and act as a liaison agent, while activating his younger son and his wife in the direction of a foreign embassy in Tirana.

Of course, the elements recruited by Mehmet Shehu over a long period, or the hostile and immoral elements of his own family would not suffice for him to accomplish the evil work the CIA and the UDB demanded of him. He would aim to extend the network of agents and conspirators everywhere. To this end in 1972 he was directed and ordered by the American CIA to work out concrete plans to overturn the situation in Albania in favour of the West, to set in motion and urge in this direction the agents known or unknown to him, regardless of whose they were, Yugoslav, Greek, British, Italian, and others, but avoiding compromising himself.

1 Officer of the British military mission in Albania, secret agent of the Intelligence Service, a friend of Liri Gega and Mustafa Gjinishi. During the National Liberation War he was attached to the Staff of the 1st Division of the ANLA. See Enver Hoxha «The Anglo-American Threat to Albania» (Memoirs), Tirana 1982, p. 224, Eng. ed.

Thus began the implementation of the ramified conspiratorial plan organized under cover by Mehmet Shehu:

I. The hostile activity of Fadil Paçrami and his group in the field of culture, art and the radio and television service for the degeneration of the line in these fields. However, as is known, the Party quickly dealt with this group and its activity. Mehmet Shehu hastened to wash his hands of them, indeed, he thundered loudly against people of art and the youth in order to realize his anti-party aims in this way, as he had done during the War, to create antagonism in the relations and the links of the Party with these strata.

II. In 1973 the group of Beqir Balluku was set in motion. It prepared the military putsch through the black theses, «the theory of slipping away», of abandoning the coast and the cities to imperialist aggressors, the patrons of Mehmet Shehu. Beqir Balluku was completely unmasked. Even Petrit Dume and Hito Çako, who were in the plot, abandoned him. Mehmet Shehu, who was the head of the plot and pulled the strings behind the scenes (now it turns out that all the strategic and tactical plans had been worked out contrary to the plans of the Council of Defence and these black materials, as they were called when we discovered them, had been approved by him), tried to save Petrit Dume and Hito Çako. They had great hopes that through Mehmet Shehu their «heads would be saved», as he told them in the Plenum of the Central Committee which met at that time on these problems, and they did not give Mehmet Shehu away, but he could not save them from the danger for fear of damaging himself.

III. Meanwhile Mehmet Shehu, this time more directly, set in motion his henchmen Abdyl Këllezi, Koço Theodhosi and Kiço Ngjela to carry out sabotage in the economic field, especially in the oil industry and agriculture, to disorganize the economy of the country by beginning to work out and introduce forms of Yugoslav self-administration.

However, as is known, Mehmet Shehu failed in these three directions.

Throughout this period, Tito, who was following the si-

tuation attentively, thought that since he had his agent in the leadership of our Party and state, after the fall of Ranković in Yugoslavia and the exposure of the barbarities which he had perpetrated in Kosova, as well as after the situations which were created with our leaving the Warsaw Treaty, he could make some concessions in regard to Kosova and our relations with it. Kosova began to breathe a little more freely, Albanian schools were opened, the University of Prishtina was set up, cultural relations, visits to one another and other activities began. Tito and company cherished the old dream that through Kosova they could influence the liberal forces in Albania and, in this way, make possible the union of Albania with Kosova in the framework of Yugoslavia. When the leaders of Kosova told Tito: «The Albanians are fanning up nationalist sentiments and speaking against you,» he replied: «That's not your business, let them abuse me if they want to...» Tito said this because he knew that in Albania he had Mehmet Shehu, who, after three failures, was regrouping the other conspirators, especially in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with Kadri Hazbiu, Feçor Shehu and some others. Nevertheless, Mehmet Shehu needed time to hatch up new plots.

Meanwhile Tito died. A situation of political and economic insecurity was created in Yugoslavia. The world capitalist crisis had gripped Yugoslavia, too, which was up to its ears in debt. The situation was seething in Kosova more than anywhere else on account of the Great-Serb oppression, the unemployment and the gloomy prospects for the working people who saw that in their Motherland, in socialist Albania, the situation was quite different. Thus, Kosova did not serve as a bridgehead for the penetration of Titoite self-administration and ideological degeneration into Albania, but Albania showed Kosova the brilliant features of true socialism in our country. And this it did through normal, official bilateral relations and contacts with Kosova and not through secret agents, because, first, this was not the line of our Party and, second, the Yugoslav secret agency (through Feçor Shehu) was at the

head of the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Therefore, the «theses» of the Yugoslavs about the alleged interference of Albania by means of secret agents for the organization of demonstrations in Kosova have no foundation. The American and Yugoslav secret agencies began to be worried lest Kosova escape from their control, lest Albania intervene, possibly, as they thought, in collaboration with Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the situation in Kosova was becoming ever more difficult and complicated. The people of Kosova and the whole Albanian population living on their own lands in Montenegro and Macedonia were seeing more and more each day that in the Titoite reality their legitimate rights, indeed, even those rights written in the Yugoslav Constitution, were being violated and denied.

The profound economic and political crisis which had swept the whole of Yugoslavia was manifesting itself in more tragic colours in Kosova. Not only was the standard of living several times lower than the average of Yugoslavia, but the gap was being ceaselessly widened to the detriment of the Kosovars; unemployment, especially among the Albanian youth there, was wreaking havoc. Whereas 10-15 years earlier the demagogue Tito had laid the blame on Ranković for the mass expulsions and displacements of Kosovars to Turkey and the Western countries, now the Kosovars were seeing that they were forced to leave their lands and betake themselves to the markets of the West, just as in the «time of Ranković». At that time Ranković drove them out, now unemployment was driving them out just the same, indeed, in even greater numbers. Hence, it was not one or five Rankoviés that were to blame, but the Yugoslav reality, the Titoite «self-administrative socialism». The people of Kosova were bound to become conscious of this reality, just as they did. However, these were not the only reasons which were bringing the cauldron to boiling-point. Above all, the people of Kosova and the whole Albanian population living in their own territories in Yugoslavia saw and felt deeply that in Titoite Yugoslavia they were treated

as second-rate citizens, their legitimate rights were trampled on and they were insulted and despised by the Titoites for what has always been dearest to the heart of the Albanian: his national pride and dignity.

Precisely in such situations which had long been boiling up, the demonstrations took place in Kosova at the beginning of 1981. The Great-Serbs and the Yugoslav UDB were alarmed, sent in the army and crushed the demonstrations with tanks. Hundreds of people were killed and wounded. A conflagration dangerous to the internal situation of Yugoslavia, now shaken by both economic crises and political crises, broke out. These savage repressive measures caused a great sensation in international opinion. Albania maintained an open stand, as resolute as it was wise.

Apart from the slanders that these demonstrations had allegedly been inspired by Albania, the Yugoslavs had to take immediate measures to «discredit» the «Stalinist» Albanian leadership in order to disturb and overturn the sound situation in Albania, as well as to confuse the patriotic-revolutionary forces in Kosova.

They demanded that their agent Mehmet Shehu acted. The Yugoslav UDB was in collaboration with the CIA and was aware of its directive for the liquidation of Enver Hoxha. Therefore, they demanded that Mehmet Shehu send his wife urgently to Paris. The demonstrations took place in March, while she went to Paris in April 1981. There an envoy from Çalamani (Mugoša himself had died, but his mission as an agent «lived on») presented himself to her and gave her the poison which had to be administered immediately to Enver Hoxha.

Figret Shehu and Mehmet Shehu had racked their brains together about when, where and how they would act with the variants which the CIA had suggested to them, and had found as the most feasible variant the administration of the delayed-action poison, which could be carried out when we paid each other visits. In the conditions under which I travelled the motor accident was ruled out, while the attempt

with a rifle was too sensational and with unforeseeable dangers.

The order which the Yugoslavs gave Mehmet Shehu to act immediately and quickly according to the third variant found him unprepared. Mehmet Shehu was afraid, did not like being placed in a corner with no room to move. Therefore, he appealed to his major patron, the American CIA. Fiqret Shehu began to visit the capitals of Europe — Vienna, Stockholm, Copenhagen. Both in Stockholm and in Denmark she met representatives of the CIA and put forward Mehmet Shehu's idea that they should not act hastily, as the Yugoslavs demanded, because they were not well prepared; the poisoning or physical liquidation of Enver Hoxha could be put off until March 1982 (during the winter holidays), while up till that time they could undertake some action which might cause a split in the Party and encourage the liberal element. The representative of the CIA discussed the matter with his centre and at the second meeting, this time in Denmark, gave his approval for Mehmet Shehu's variant.

In this context Mehmet Shehu arranged the engagement of his son to the daughter of a family in the circle of which there were 6 or 7 fugitive war criminals, including the notorious agent of the CIA Arshi Pipa. Such an engagement could not fail to attract the attention of the public. And it was done precisely with the aim of attracting public attention and causing a sensation. If it were accepted by the Party, it would lead to splits and liberalism among others, too, in the Party, the Youth organization, etc. If it were not accepted by the Party, measures would be taken against Mehmet Shehu, not imprisonment, of course, but demotion, removal from his position or even expulsion from the Party. This would cause a sensation and the Yugoslavs could use it, as they needed it for their propaganda purposes to discredit the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania and especially Enver Hoxha, who, as they have repeated over and over again, is «eliminating» his collaborators, as Stalin did.

However, the plans did not work out as Mehmet Shehu

had intended. The Party intervened immediately, the engagement was broken off, Mehmet Shehu was criticized by the comrades for this major political mistake, he was required to make a profound self-criticism to find the sources of such an error and it was left that this would be done after the 8th Congress of the Party.¹ He did not expect this. He tried to make «some other mistakes»: he completely neglected his report for the 8th Congress of the Party, presented it late and with flagrant political errors and the Political Bureau rejected it. Mehmet Shehu wanted to make a «self-criticism» at the Congress over the engagement of his son (his aim was to cause an upset in the Congress), but it was refused, too. In the Congress he purposely sat like a «repentant sinner» and this was so obvious to the delegates and the TV viewers that they began to ask one another why.

Meanwhile, the question of Kosova was becoming dangerous. The Yugoslavs were being unmasked before international public opinion, while the authority of our country was rising. The Yugoslavs saw that nothing happened either before the Congress or after it. Mehmet Shehu delivered the report to the Congress, he was elected to the Political Bureau and no measure was taken against him, as the Yugoslavs hoped, to demote him or to remove him from the function he had in the state. Once the Congress was over, perhaps Mehmet Shehu informed the Yugoslavs that even after the delivery of his self-criticism he was being treated just the same. From what he had understood from his talks with us the measure of sanction would be of an internal party character. This was of no benefit to the Titoites, the Great-Serbs and the Yugoslav UDB, who were expecting and wanting disorder to occur in Albania at all costs. Therefore, on the eve of the meeting of the Political Bureau, at which the grave political mistake of Mehmet Shehu was to be discussed, the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana, acting on orders which it had received from Belgrade, sent its agent and contact man Feçor Shehu to

¹ The 8th Congress of the PLA took place on November 1-8, 1981.

Mehmet Shehu to transmit the «ultimatum» of the UDB that «Enver Hoxha must be killed at all costs, even in the meeting, even if Mehmet Shehu himself is killed.» Sa hard-pressed were the UDB, the Great-Serb and Titoite clique with the situation in Kosova, so gloomy seemed the future, that they decided to «destroy» their trump card, their superagent, provided only that something spectacular would occur which would «shake socialist Albania and the Party of Labour of Albania to their foundations»!

At ten o'clock at night, on December 16, 1981, Feçor Shehu went to Mehmet Shehu's home and transmitted the order of their secret centre.

On December 17, the discussion commenced in the meeting of the Political Bureau. All the comrades, old and new, took part in the discussion, and resolutely condemned Mehmet Shehu's act of engaging his son to a girl in whose family there were 6 to 7 war criminals. They expressed their dissatisfaction with Mehmet Shehu's self-criticism, demanded that he made it more profound and disclosed where the cause of such a mistake lay, asked him many questions, reminded him that he had made mistakes during the National Liberation War also, that he had placed himself above the Party, they spoke about his unrestrained conceit and arrogance towards the cadres and towards virtually all his closest collaborators in the work of the government, the Political Bureau, etc. (On the day following the suicide, all these contributions to the discussion, which had been tape-recorded, were heard just as they were made by the whole Plenum of the Central Committee and the meetings of party activists.)

The criticisms by the members of the Political Bureau were strong, open and bolshevik, but only «the recording of a serious reprimand on his registration document» was demanded as sanction. This was the spirit in which I, too, had prepared my contribution in which I outlined the history of Mehmet Shehu's mistakes, beginning from the period of the war (this contribution, too, was heard by the Plenum of the Central Committee and by the meetings of party activists

as it would have been delivered following the contributions of other comrades). However, because the meeting went on late, my contribution was not delivered that day. Thus, it was left that the meeting would continue the following day. At the end of the discussion on the first day, I said to Mehmet Shehu:

«Reflect deeply all night and tomorrow tell us in the Political Bureau from what motives you have proceeded. Your alibi for the engagement does not hold water, something else has impelled you in this reprehensible act.»

What I said alarmed Mehmet Shehu, he suspected that the crime which he was preparing might have been discovered. The «bold» Mehmet Shehu thought all night about how to escape from the tight spot, worked out and applied a plan of his own. Apparently, he judged matters in this way: «I am as good as dead, the best thing is to save what I can,» and he decided to act like his friend Nako Spiru, to kill himself, thinking the Party would bury this «statesman», this «legendary leader», this «partisan and fighter in Spain» with honours, would not sully his reputation but would say that «the gun went off accidentally» (as he suggested in the letter which he left), and thus, at least, he would not lose his past and his family would not suffer.

Together with his wife he flushed the poison down the WC and charged his eldest son with dismantling and removing the compromising parts of the radio which he had installed for him.

Figret Shehu, as the agent she was (she who trembled and wept over nothing), agreed to the suicide of her husband coolly and cynically, provided only that their «historic» past and she and her sons were saved.

However, they had reckoned their account without the innkeeper. As soon as they informed me about Mehmet Shehu's final act, within moments I proposed that his suicide should be condemned, that he had acted as an enemy, and the Political Bureau expressed its unanimous condemnation of the act of this enemy. Not only the leadership and the Party,

but our whole people considered this a hostile act and maintained a revolutionary stand. The Party and people continued with enthusiasm, indeed, with greater determination and unity, the work for the implementation of the decisions of the 8th Congress of the Party.

The UDB and the CIA were left biting their fingers. The foreign news agencies related the fact as we had given it, that Mehmet Shehu «committed suicide in a nervous crisis». Here and there some comment secretly paid for by the Yugoslavs was made. However, even the Yugoslavs were unable to exploit this act in their official press apart from charging a student's newspaper in Zagreb to write about the «drama» which had occurred at the meeting of the Albanian leadership (according to the version which the UDB had planned). According to this newspaper, «...Mehmet Shehu fired some shots with a Chinese revolver of this or that type and calibre (!), but Enver Hoxha's comrades killed him. The fate of Enver Hoxha is not known...»

A scenario modelled on westerns with gunfights which occurred in the saloons at the time! But what could they do? This is what they wanted! But their trump card, the super-agent of the CIA and the UDB in Albania, was thrown away for no advantage.

Albania has always supported Kosova and the population of other Albanian regions of Yugoslavia in their legitimate rights, but Kosova, all the Albanians who rose in demonstrations, do not realize what colossal assistance they gave Albania by forcing the Yugoslav UDB to play its trump card and destroy its last «great hope» of overthrowing the Marxist-Leninist leadership in Albania, which had continually unmasked and was relentlessly unmasking the Titoite betrayal, self-administration, non-alignment, this filthy agency of American and British imperialism, of international reaction, of social-democracy and whoever else you like.

Together with Mehmet Shehu, the agencies of the imperialists, social-imperialists and others, like the Yugoslav UDB, received a blow which they will feel for a long time.

Their network of agents which had Mehmet Shehu in the centre was uncovered thread by thread, attacked in all its joints and connections, and everything which had to do with this terrible network of long-standing secret agents and conspirators is now in our hands.

Here I must point out that the dangerous plot of Mehmet Shehu, just as other plotters and plotting groups before it, were discovered through the strength and vigilance of the Party and its leadership and none by the State Security. Why? Because, as is known, Koçi Xoxe, a notorious agent of Tito-Ranković, who was condemned as such for crimes which have been dealt with in detail in this book, was minister of the internal affairs until 1948. Then, he was succeeded by Mehmet Shehu to be followed later by Kadri Hazbiu and more recently, by Feçor Shehu. Unfortunately for the people and the Party none of them was suspected to be an agent, while the three of them, just like Koçi Xoxe, were active agents, mainly of the Yugoslav UDB, who covered up the dirty linen and crimes of one another and some of their collaborators around them, and for almost four decades kept hidden from the Party all information about the espionage activity of one another. None of these plotters, Mehmet Shehu included, openly opposed the line of the Party, because they were afraid of the Party, its unity and the Party-people unity. The uncovering of all these plots, especially the criminal plot of Mehmet Shehu, as well as the information and documents now in the hands of the Party, some of which have been dealt with in these notes, go to prove that Mehmet Shehu and his collaborators acted simply as agents behind the back of the Party and its leadership, not as open opponents of the line or policy of the Party, but as plotters in the service of foreign secret services. Their mission was to act and plot secretly so as to change the sound situation in Albania; to overthrow the people's state power and clear the way for their foreign patrons, who for more than 40 years, not to go even further back, have always hatched up sinister plans and have had criminal aims, to violate the independence

of Albania, to deprive the Albanian people of their freedom and rights won at the expense of so much blood and sweat.

After the final traumatic blow we dealt them, the foreign secret services, and the Titoite UDB among them, in their rage and despair turned to forms and methods which we had long experience of and from which they themselves had never seen any good: they tried to feel our pulse and shake us through a group of hired mercenaries and bandits! Apparently, they forgot what «victories» they had scored with the saboteurs and criminals they had sent us in the first years after Liberation! But we, too, were quick to riposte to them: if in the 50's there were cases when we needed even 4-5 days, and at times even more, to detect and wipe out their bands of saboteurs now we needed no more than 5 hours to discover and wipe out the terrorist band of Xhevdet Mustafa, which was sent by the UDB. This ought to serve as a lesson to the enemies of Albania abroad, that such bands of criminals, large or small, from the East or the West, will be wiped out mercilessly by a people who are all armed and on guard. This is what has occurred and always will occur with any one who dares to carry out the adventurous orders of imperialists and revisionists! We are well aware that even after this the foreign secret services, and together with them the UDB, will not sit idle. However, they will never catch us asleep. We will never be lacking in vigilance.

Let everyone understand clearly: the walls of our fortress are of unshakeable granite rock.

This is in general outline the history of our relations with the CPY and the revisionist Yugoslav state: on their part, it is a history of interference and traps, of ceaseless plots to damage our Party and socialist state, while, on our part, it is a history of just and consistent struggle by our Party and people determined never to fall for any of their traps and plots, to uncover and foil them before they cause us serious harm.

For socialist Albania to develop and march forward we

defined and consistently followed the road which seemed to us to be the most correct one — the road which is based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and which has always fulfilled the loftiest aspirations and desires of our brave, hard-working and revolutionary people. This has been and is the road of the constant consolidation of the leading role of the Party and of the active participation of the masses in all the life of the country, of the defence of the independence of the Homeland, of the deepening of the all-round revolution in all fields, of the gradual and constant raising of the well-being of the masses, etc. All along this time, our numerous enemies, and the Yugoslav Titoites in particular, resorted to all means of pressure to swerve us from this course, sometimes through threats, sometimes «pitying us» or accusing us of being «on a wrong», «dogmatic», «Stalinist road», etc., etc.

We never listened to this «advice» or «admonishments» of the enemies, but followed consistently the road we had mapped out, conscious of its correctness. Only time was to prove and our people were to judge whether we had gone in the right or wrong direction. And time, the reality, has long proved and continues to prove with the utmost clarity who was right and who was wrong.

The so much advertised creature of Tito — the «self-administrative» Yugoslavia of «specific socialism», has been totally engulfed by the gravest crisis in its history and is now in a very grave situation with no way out.

The Yugoslav system has been reduced to bad shape, the development of events has torn down all masks and dispelled all illusions. The external pompous appearances, the misleading advertisements of a «well-being such as can be found in no other place»(!), of a «Yugoslavia of freedom and abundance» (!) have left the place to all-round crisis, poverty and growing unemployment, galloping inflation, and increasing shortages of even the most essential goods and articles of broad consumption, etc.

Just as they did with Tito in his last breath, the im-

perialists and social-imperialists are doing their utmost to give the Yugoslav system a new lease of life, to keep it alive, although this system is wholly gangrened. No blood transfusion, either from Washington, Moscow or whatever international bank or fund, can save it. This is the logical end of all revisionist theory and practice. The imperialist and social-imperialist creditors take the money from their safes, not because they ache to help the peoples of Yugoslavia out of their misery, but because they want to protect their political and economic interest in Yugoslavia, to expand or consolidate the domains Tito has long ago sold them in return for the credits he has received from them. But if for a period of time it seemed as if Yugoslavia was to gain in this dangerous game, now the time has come for Yugoslavia to put itself up for auction to the imperialists and social-imperialists. A first-class borrower, shaken to its very foundations in all respects, with no clear perspective, without the necessary means and forces to find the road of salvation — such is the present-day Titoite self-administrative Yugoslavia.

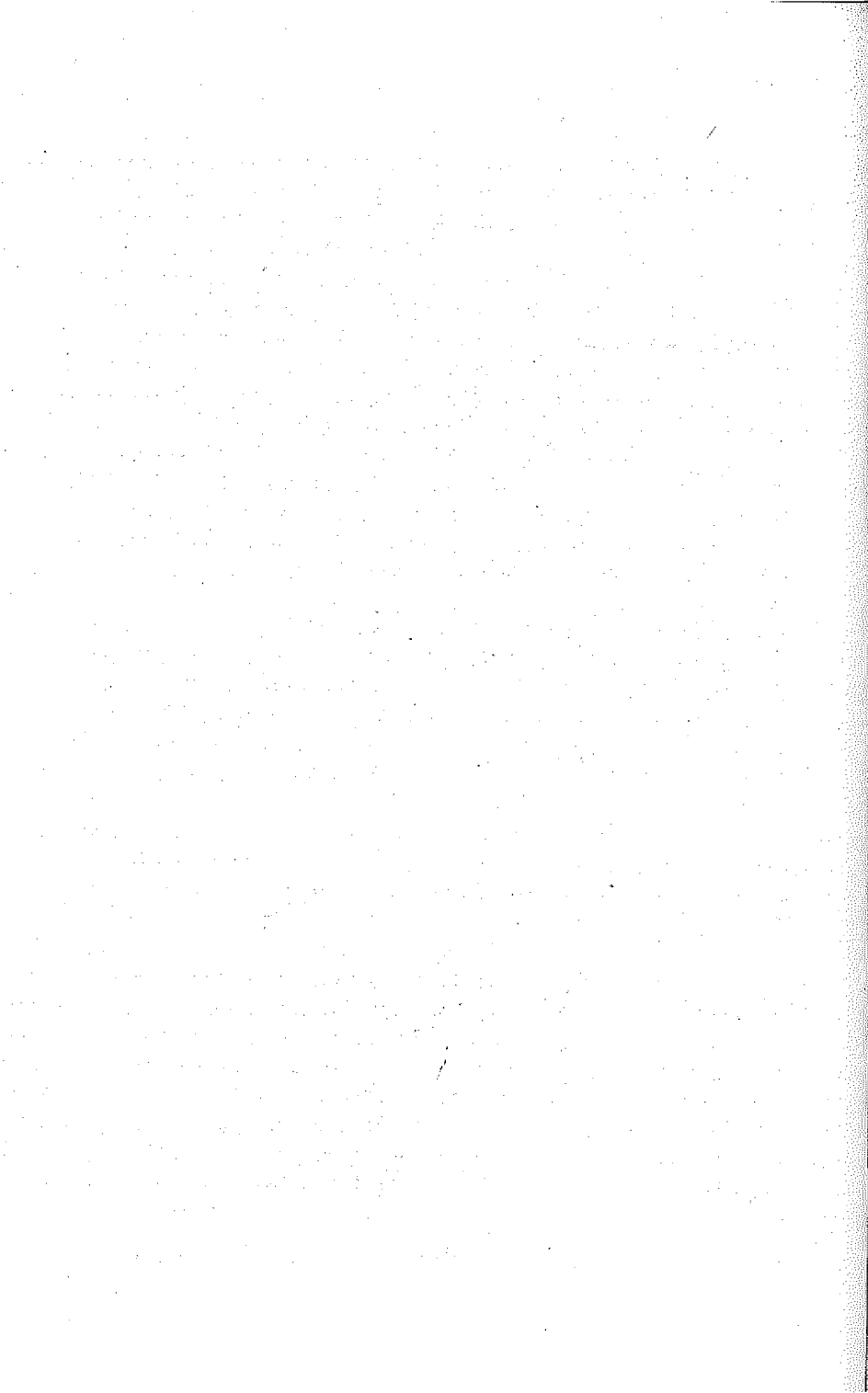
We cannot watch without concern this extremely grave and dangerous situation, not only for the fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia, but also for peace and security in the Balkans and beyond the Balkans. We have never wished those peoples ill, on the contrary we have always been for good neighbourly relations with them. In vain Tito and company accused us — and his present-day successors follow him in this, of creating turbulent situations and interfering in their internal affairs. No, the evil seed is in their midst, they have planted and tended it to grow with their own hands, so let them find it and fight it there where they have it.

Quite the opposite is the case with our country, with our course of the construction of socialism. Consistently applying the Marxist-Leninist principles in the construction and leadership of the entire life of the country, socialist Albania has marched with sure steps ahead, without holding its hand out to anyone. We have come up against many difficulties

and obstacles, have grappled with them fearlessly, have been fully aware of and accepted privations and sacrifices, while always, like a thrifty family, going by the principle of building and enjoying what we build, not only for ourselves and just for today but going about it in such a way that our life and that of the new generations become ever better and at the same time, the future, the life of the coming generations, be ever happier, richer and more secure. Our wonderful people have understood the road the Party has shown them, and aware of it, have mobilized all their mental and physical energies to turn the teachings and directives of the Party into reality. Every generation in our country is fighting and working so as to bequeath to the future generations an ever stronger Albania, an Albania permanently free and independent, with a beautiful present and with clear and brilliant perspectives.

So, with the Party at the head, having its Marxist-Leninist line as our guiding compass, we will always go on working vigilantly, further tempering unity, marching ahead, with the Party and people united as one, so as to keep the name of our heroic Party always honoured, to raise the prestige of socialist Albania ever higher, to preserve the sacred independence of our Homeland intact. This has been and remains the lofty mission of our Party of Labour. To this mission, to the good of the people and socialism, we have devoted and will devote all our life, all our forces and energies.

1981-1982



CONTENTS

RIISING ABOVE OLD ANIMOSITIES	page 3—20
By way of Introduction	

A brief historical survey ■ The decision of the Albanian communists to establish connections with the CPY ■ The monarchs of Serbia and princes of Montenegro — the main culprits for the bitter relations between the Albanian and Serbian, Montenegrin and other peoples in the past ■ One of the gravest injustices of this century in Europe — in 1913 Albania was cut in half arbitrarily ■ The Great-Serb genocide in the Albanian regions in Yugoslavia in the period between the two wars. Why did the Albanian communists enter into relations with the CPY at the time of the National Liberation War?

I

FROM THE FIRST CONTACTS TO THE FIRST DOUBTS AND FRICTIONS	21—128
THE TRUTH ABOUT AN ABSURD CLAIM	24
TITO'S «ROVING AMBASSADOR» SPINS THE THREADS OF THE WEB OVER THE BALKANS	42
OMINOUS SIGNS OVER AN OLD PROBLEM	74

Tito's first letter — a letter of «advice that came too late» ■ The truth on the Titoite claim that allegedly the CPA «is created by the CPY» ■

Svetoazar Vukmanović-Tempo in Albania: «I have a great idea in my head: it includes Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece». Fierce quarrel with Tempo in the summer of 1943. Koçi Xoxe — Tempo's first «recruit» ■ Tito seeks to preserve the domains of the old Yugoslavia. The question of Istria and the question of Kosova ■ The Bujan Conference in December 1943 ■ Dušan Mugoša crisscrosses Albania and begins recruiting agents for the Yugoslavs.

II

THE BACKSTAGE PLOT OF BERAT	129—222
THE «STOJNIC MISSION»	132
ON THE EVE OF THE PLOT	163
THE BERAT PLOT	182

The «Stojnić mission» in Albania ■ Nijaz Dizdarević — the «éminence grise» of Nako Spiru ■ The Soviet Major Ivanov «is informed» about us through Stojnić ■ The establishment of our main leadership in liberated Berat ■ Nako Spiru, Koçi Xoxe, Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo are engaged in the Titoite plot. Liri Gega in the role of the «scapegoat» ■ Three steps of the «Stojnić mission»: first — the departure of Miladin Popović from Albania; second — the split of our Political Bureau; third — the split of the CC of the CPA and the condemnation of our main leadership ■ The seeds of disruption and self-exposure are growing behind the «unity» of the plotters ■ V. Stojnić's discussion — the Titoite platform for the subju-

gation of the CPA and the gobbling up of Albania ■ Tito, the intermediary of the British ■ The people's revolts in Kosova ■ Stojnić serves up the idea of the «Balkan Federation» headed by Yugoslavia ■ The bitter fruits of the Berat Plenum.

III

TITO'S SECRET AGENCY IN ACTION	223—270
«DEFENCE» DE JURE IN ORDER TO GOBBLE UP ALBANIA DE FACTO	224
THE SECRET AGENTS OF BELGRADE IN OUR RANKS	243
THE END OF SEJFULLA MALĚSHOVA BRINGS THE PLOT HATCHED UP BY THE YUGOSLAVS MORE TO LIGHT	255

Belgrade sent the Albanian-speaking Titoite Josip Djerdja in place of Stojnić ■ The 7th Cabinet, for... Albania in the chancellery of the Yugoslav Federation ■ Why is Tito «against» the partitioning of Albania?! ■ The truth on the Pijade-Tsaldaris negotiations in August 1946 ■ A «joke» between Tito and King Paul about the dividing up of Albania ■ Debate on the policy of elections to the Constituent Assembly; S. Malëshova: «We must allow the opposition freedom to take part in the elections independently»; K. Xoxe: «The Yugoslav comrades were not afraid to reach agreement even with the bourgeoisie»; N. Spiru: «We have no reason to fear our opponents now»; the people: «We prefer not to vote at all rather than vote for the reactionaries» ■ Quarrels break out between the plotters them-

selves ■ The 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA in February 1946 ■ The theses for the re-examination of the Berat Plenum ■ Belgrade helping its own agents.

IV

WITH TITO 271—298

Tito's unexpected invitation to go to Belgrade ■ Official talks between the Albanian and Yugoslav delegations. Discussion of the question of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia ■ Tito aims to gobble up the whole of the Balkans ■ Policy of extermination in Kosova ■ Tito's haughtiness and scandalous luxury ■ About the visits in Croatia and Slovenia ■ Ceremony in the Presidium of the Yugoslav Skupština ■ A meeting with Tito in Bled. «Naš Tito» or «Duce a noi!»? ■ On the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid ■ «Aid» in dribblets.

V

TITOITE AID — CHAINS FOR THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENSLAVEMENT OF ALBANIA 299—352

FRIENDS OR PLUNDERERS?!	306
BEHIND TITO'S ACCUSATION OF «TWO LINES» AND «ANTI-YUGOSLAVISM» IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CPA	327

Grave situation of our economy after Libera-

tion ■ The friends leave us to fend for ourselves in our poverty ■ Market sharks, generous in «advice» and «orientations» ■ The bitter history of the Albanian-Yugoslav Economic Convention. On the problem of the parity of the currencies, the removal of tariff barriers, the joint companies, the unification of prices. Our objections to the true nature of the treaties signed ■ The ill-famed Savo Zlatić in Albania ■ Tito's accusation of «two lines in the leadership of the CPA» ■ On the visit of our top-level delegation to Moscow. Belgrade accuses us of «anti-Yugoslavism» ■ Tito and his men want to discredit our leadership with Stalin ■ The Yugoslavs keep us under surveillance and sabotage us ■ Further aggravation of our relations with them.

VI

TITO PUTS INTO ACTION THE PLAN TO GOBBLE UP ALBANIA	353—390
TITO'S SECOND ACCUSATION AGAINST THE CPA	356
THE VENGEANCE OF THE YUGOSLAV AGENTS	373

Tito's second accusation... «The CC of the CPY is not satisfied with the relations with you» ■ A heated debate with the emissary of the Yugoslav leadership. Tito seeks to turn «Federative Balkans» into a «power» concentrated in his hands. The demand to send back the Soviet advisers ■ On the ill-famed Co-ordination Commission ■ Tito decides to discard his former agent — Nako Spiru. Koçi Xoxe seeks vengeance. Further aggravation of the situation in our Political Bureau ■ Why did Nako

Spiru commit suicide? Belgrade demands the liquidation of the General Secretary of the CPA ■ Outbreak of the savage attack against the CPA, its leadership and the line it pursued. Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo acting to realize Tito's plans.

VII

OUR FIRST VISIT TO THE PR OF BULGARIA	391—418
Ranković charges Koçi Xoxe with surveillance over our activity	

The invitation of Dimitrov for us to visit the PR of Bulgaria ■ A short stop in Belgrade. Meeting with Tito ■ Ranković calls Koçi Xoxe to a secret meeting. He is charged with surveillance over our activity ■ Emotional welcome in Sofia ■ Official talks ■ Dinner with Georgi Dimitrov. Midnight incident ■ The end of official talks in Kritchim. Georgi Dimitrov: «Keep the Party pure. Let it be revolutionary, proletarian, and everything will go well with you» ■ The journey through Belgrade — Tito in Rumania ■ The return to the Homeland.

VIII

THE TITOITES HEADING FOR INEVITABLE EXPOSURE AND DEFEAT	419—498
ENSLAVING OFFERS	421
A BLACK STAIN ON THE HISTORY OF OUR PARTY	446
THE TITOITES' RUSH TOWARDS DEFEAT	462

Enslaving offers. On the Co-ordination Commission ■ Yugoslav militarymen pour into Tirana: «Imminent danger is threatening Albania!» Nako Spiru insists on putting Mehmet Shehu at the head of the General Staff of the Army. Tempo's military theses ■ General Hamović demands the creation of a unified command ■ General Kuprešanin in Tirana. Tito: «I beg you to give us the base in Korça for one division.» Notifying Stalin about the question of the Yugoslav division ■ The 8th Plenum of the CC — a black stain on the history of the CPA. The temporary triumph of the Yugoslav theses ■ Monstrous attack of Koçi Xoxe and others on the Party and its sound cadres ■ Kuprešanin, Zlatić and others: «Tito wants you to demand the union with Yugoslavia.» ■ Astonishing haste of the Titoites ■ The historic letter of Stalin ■ Ignominious departure of Tito's envoys from Albania.

IX

OUR FINAL BREACH WITH TITO AND THE TITOITES 499—566

THE PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF TITOISM	500
AN INCOGNITO JOURNEY TO RUMANIA IN CONNECTION WITH TITO'S BETRAYAL	509
THE END OF THE TITOITES IN OUR COUNTRY	542

The public denunciation of Titoism ■ On the relations of the CPA with the CPSU and the parties of the other countries until 1948 ■ An incognito journey to Rumania in connection with Tito's

betrayal. A meeting with Andrey Vyshinsky. The meeting with Vyshinsky and Dej. Irrefutable arguments of the CPA on Tito's traitorous activity. Vyshinsky: «The Bolshevik Party approves the correct activity and struggle of the CPA in defence of Marxism-Leninism.» A visit to Bucharest. Back home ■ Desperate manoeuvres of Koçi Xoxe and company to escape exposure and rendering account ■ Profound analyses in our Political Bureau. Kristo Themelko and Pandi Kristo testify ■ The 10th and 11th Plenums of the CC of the CPA. «The line of the CPA has been correct. It has been attacked but has not wavered, has been threatened but has not been damaged» ■ The historic 1st Congress of the CPA. Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo in the dock ■ The end of our relations with Tito and the Titoites.

X

IN OPEN STRUGGLE WITH THE TITOITES	567—633
THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TITOISM — AN HISTORICAL IMPERATIVE	568
THE PLOTS CONTINUE	579

The struggle against Titoism — an historical imperative ■ Our first clash with the Khrushchevites over the «Yugoslav question» ■ On the Tito-Ranković «democracy» ■ The Belgrade leadership throws into action the anti-Albanian scum, criminals and saboteurs ■ Khrushchevite betrayal assisting the Titoite betrayal. Smashing the Titoite-Khrushchevite plot at the Party Conference of Tirana (April 1956) ■ Mehmet Shehu — a multiple

agent of the imperialist-revisionist secret services ■ Mehmet Shehu's juggling from the Berat Plenum (November 1944) to the 1st Congress of the CPA (November 1948) ■ The year 1960. Mehmet Shehu together with Tito, Randolph Churchill and Fultz on the transatlantic liner «Queen Elisabeth». Whom was this servant of many bosses to please and whom to displease? ■ In the 70's. The western and the Titoite secret agencies order Mehmet Shehu into action. Three conspirators' groups foiled ■ Demonstrations in Kosova force the UDB to sacrifice the card on which they had «placed great hopes» in Albania. Why did Mehmet Shehu commit suicide? ■ The hope on terrorist bands ■ Socialist Albania has been and remains a granite rock.

«THE TITOITES» is another book in the series of memoirs and historical and political notes of Comrade Enver Hoxha. Written mainly in the period 1981-82, it comprises the author's historical notes, reminiscences and detailed analyses of the history of the relations between the Communist Party of Albania and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, as well as between the Albanian state and the Yugoslav state. Most of this book deals with the period from the first direct contacts (1941) to the final breach of the CPA with Tito and the Titoites (1948). An important place is also given to the struggle of the PLA to uncover and foil the ceaseless anti-Marxist and anti-Albanian activity of the Titoite leadership and its secret agents in the period from 1949 to this day.

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